United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.1

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

First Committee
1st meeting
Thursday, 13 September 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

Temporary Chairman: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea, President of the General Assembly)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Election of the Chairman of the First Committee

The Temporary Chairman: Rule 103 of the rules of procedure, as amended by Assembly resolution 52/163 of 15 December 1997, provides that each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. These officers shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence. The elections shall be held by secret ballot unless the Committee decides otherwise in an election where only one candidate is standing. The nomination of each candidate shall be limited to one speaker, after which the Committee shall immediately proceed to the election.

Furthermore, rule 110 of the rules of procedure provides that congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session — or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation — after all the officers of the Committee have been elected.

This meeting has been convened for the election of the Chairman of the First Committee. Are there any nominations?

Mr. Than (Myanmar): May I begin by offering our heartfelt sympathy and deepest condolences to the delegation of the United States for the national tragedy — the extensive loss of life and the devastation caused by the terrorist attacks against the Pentagon in Washington and the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September. At this solemn moment of tragedy, our hearts and minds are with the innocent victims and their bereaved families. We are overwhelmed by psychological shock and moral revulsion and by the magnitude of the tragedy and catastrophe caused by these dastardly and evil acts of terrorism.

Turning to the matter under consideration, I should like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election as the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. I am very delighted to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs of a friendly Asian country, the Republic of Korea, presiding over the Assembly. I wish you every success, Sir, in discharging your onerous responsibilities as the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, for his outstanding performance and invaluable contribution during his tenure as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

I have the honour and pleasure of nominating His Excellency Mr. André Erdös of Hungary for election to the chairmanship of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. Ambassador André Erdös is eminently qualified to hold the chairmanship of the First Committee. Ambassador André Erdös has been associated with disarmament for a long time. He

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has a wealth of expertise and experience in the field of arms control and disarmament. Ambassador André Erdös has a long, distinguished diplomatic career, and has served in the Hungarian foreign service in various capacities.

He served as the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations in New York from 1990 to 1994 and again from 1997 to date. He took an active part in the meetings of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Moreover, he served as the Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1994. He was a member of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters from 1995 to 1999. He was the Vice-President of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the NPT Review Conference in 2000. The candidature of Ambassador André Erdös for the chairmanship of the First Committee has been endorsed by the Group of Eastern European countries.

Accordingly, I hope that the candidature of Ambassador André Erdös will receive the unanimous approval of this Assembly.

The Temporary Chairman: Mr. André Erdös of Hungary has been nominated by the representative of Myanmar. Since only one candidate has been nominated, I propose that under rule 103 the Committee decide not to hold a secret ballot.

It was so decided.

The Temporary Chairman: I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. André Erdös of Hungary elected Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

The meeting rose at 3.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.2

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

First Committee
2nd meeting
Thursday, 4 October 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Terrorist attacks in the United States

The Chairman: At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the entire membership of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, to extend the Committee's sincere condolences to the Government and people of the United States for the terrible loss in human lives and property they suffered as a result of the senseless and barbaric terrorist attacks in New York, in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere on 11 September. I also wish to extend our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims and to the people of New York. I request members to honour the memory of the innocent people who lost their lives in the attacks and in the aftermath.

The members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: Let me begin our proceedings by extending a warm and sincere welcome to all the delegations participating in the deliberations of the First Committee at this fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I have no doubt that we will be working in a constructive manner during the current session.

My appreciation goes to all delegations for the confidence that they have placed in my country and me by electing me Chairman of this important Committee. I will endeavour to accomplish the tasks ahead of us in a manner that will justify the trust that members have so generously bestowed upon me.

Let me say how much I appreciate the very kind gesture of Ambassador U Mya Than of Myanmar in nominating me for the chairmanship at the Committee's first meeting. I request the representative of Myanmar to kindly convey, on behalf of the Committee and on my own behalf, our congratulations — and gratitude — to Ambassador U Mya Than on the outstanding manner in which he presided over the deliberations of the First Committee at the fifty-fifth session.

As I undertake my duty, I have to say that I will have to depend on the cooperation and assistance of the Committee's entire membership, as well as on the valuable experience, knowledge and competence of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, Mr. Chen Jian, the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Mohammad Sattar, and his Secretariat colleagues, who, I am sure, will contribute greatly to the success of our work. I know that the First Committee will benefit from their experience, and I look forward to their support in dealing with the many important issues before us.

I am fully aware that the tasks assigned to this Committee are complex and multifaceted, but, with members' help, guidance and indulgence, I intend to discharge my responsibilities with determination and impartiality, in order to ensure that our work is

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conducted in an orderly fashion and that our endeavours result in a successful conclusion of the work of the First Committee. The tasks before us are not easy, and I therefore count on the full and invaluable cooperation of all delegations.

Election of officers

The Chairman: Before we proceed to the election of the officers, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to the decision that was taken by the General Assembly at its meeting back in 1971, on a beautiful 22 September, concerning the procedure for the election of officers of the Main Committees. According to the terms of that decision, the nomination of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee should immediately proceed to the election. The Committee will therefore follow that same procedure today. That being said, we shall now proceed to the election of our office holders.

Mr. Maandi (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall leave it to the Permanent Representative of my country, Mr. Abdallah Baali, to present in due course my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament and International Security Committee. I, too, would like to take this opportunity, however, to express to you our congratulations and our pleasure at seeing you preside over this Committee. I am confident that your chairmanship will be added to the long record of your skills and achievements, which are certainly praiseworthy. I would also like to assure you that my delegation is ready to cooperate fully with you. I wish you every success in your work.

I would also like to convey to you the greetings of Ambassador Abdelkader Mesdoua, who was a Vice-Chairman of this Committee at the previous session.

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to propose today the candidacy of Mr. Lee Kie-cheon, Counsellor of the Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, as a Vice-Chairman of the First Committee for this session. Mr. Lee has held very important posts involving great responsibility in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Republic of Korea. He was Deputy Director of the Department of United Nations Affairs from 1990 to 1992. He was then Director of Information Planning Affairs and Director of United Nations Economic Affairs, from 1996 to 1997. Then he was Director of the Department of Disarmament and Nuclear Affairs, from 1998 to 1999. Mr. Lee also held a post in his country's Mission in Vienna, Austria, as Counsellor before the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other international organizations, from 1994 to 1995. At the Republic of Korea's Permanent Mission here in New York, he was appointed Counsellor for disarmament and international security affairs.

It should also be noted that Mr. Lee began his activities in the diplomatic field in 1979. Thus, his broad experience and expertise in the field of disarmament and international security would certainly support and strengthen his candidacy. I am confident that if he assumes the post of Vice-Chairman of our Committee, he will do much to help support the Chairman of our Committee. Therefore, I hope that the candidacy of Mr. Lee Kie-cheon will be supported by all delegations in our Committee.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Algeria for his nomination of Mr. Lee Kie-cheon of the Republic of Korea for the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. I also wish to convey, through him, to my good friend Mr. Abdelkader Mesdoua, the Committee's appreciation for the distinction with which he carried out his duties and for his valuable contribution to the work of the First Committee as a Vice-Chairman last year.

Since there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Mr. Lee Kie-cheon of the Republic of Korea elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation?

It was so decided.

Mr. Guani (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I must begin by expressing my country's sense of solidarity with the Government and the people of the United States, which on 11 September were victims of a senseless demonstration of terrorism that deserves our most vigorous repudiation, and calls for global action to eliminate this scourge.

The work in the field of disarmament and international security are especially relevant during this session of the General Assembly. We wish to express to you, Ambassador Erdös, our satisfaction at seeing you conducting our work, and we wish you every possible

success. We would also like to express our great appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador U Mya Than of Myanmar, for the way in which he presided over our work in the previous session.

At the beginning of this new session, it is a special honour and pleasure for my delegation to nominate Ambassador Milos Alcalay as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. Mr. Alcalay has already been endorsed by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. Ambassador Alcalay does not in fact need any introduction. In the short time that he has been the Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations he has already demonstrated his eloquence and made substantial contributions to the work of the Organization as the Chairman of the Committee on Information. Moreover, we are certain that his contributions to the work of this important Committee of the General Assembly will be a continuation of his vast diplomatic, inter-parliamentary and academic experience in the course of many years of useful work.

In the course of his career, in which he has served with particular distinction, we recognize his eloquence speaking abilities in the Latin American Parliament and as a representative to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. As the true Bolivarian he is, is academic work has also been part of our integration process. He also represented his country in France, the European Community, Romania, Israel and, most recently, Brazil.

Our appreciation goes out to Ambassador Alcalay. We express the hope that his work as Vice-Chairman of the Committee will be crowned with success. Likewise, we convey the same wishes to the other members of the Bureau.

As the representative of Uruguay, I would also like to convey my thanks to my colleagues in the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the opportunity they have given me to represent them during the fifty-fifth session. To my colleagues Mr. Abdelkader Mesdoua of Algeria, Ms. Petra Schneebauer of Austria and Ratislav Gabriel of Slovakia I extend my great appreciation for their very effective and productive contributions to the work of the Bureau.

I would especially like to thank all the members of the Committee's secretariat for their constant and invaluable support. I wish Mr. Mohammad Sattar every success. Finally, I wish to recognize the very efficient Mr. Lin Kuo-chung for his many years of service to the Committee.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Uruguay for his nomination of Ambassador Milos Alcalay to the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. I wish to extend to him the Committee's sincere appreciation for his own valuable contribution to the work of the Committee in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Since there are no other nominations and I am going to repeat the same formal text, with the indulgence of the Committee, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador Milos Alcalay elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I give the floor to the representative of Austria, Mr. Robert Mueller.

Mr. Mueller (Austria) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Allow me to assure you of the Austrian delegation's full cooperation as you carry out your important task.

On behalf of my colleague, Ms. Petra Schneebauer, who has taken up her new duties in the office of the Austrian President, I have the honour and pleasure to nominate Mr. Stéphane De Loecker as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

Mr. De Loecker joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium in 1985. Two years later he joined the office of the Belgian Minister for Foreign Trade, where he worked on international trade issues, and became First Secretary of Belgium's delegation to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). From 1991 to 1993 Mr. De Loecker was the Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the Western European Union in London. From 1993 to 1994 he was an administrator in the OECD secretariat, where he was in charge of writing economic reports on Germany and Greece. After three years as chargé d'affaires ad interim to the Belgian embassy in Burundi, Mr. De Loecker served his country as Ambassador to Ethiopia,

Eritrea and Djibouti from 1997 to 1999. During that time he also served as Belgium's special envoy for the Great Lakes region. In 1999 he briefly interrupted his diplomatic service in order to meet a new challenge, namely, coordinating international relations for the European soccer cup, *Euro 2000*. Since September 2000 Mr. De Loecker has been the Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would also like to mention the fact that Mr. De Loecker is a fine example of a career diplomat who has never forgotten that there is a world beyond the diplomatic world. His various other interests include philosophy, opera and dance. I am also convinced that his other interests, in particular skiing and mountain climbing, will provide him with all the necessary perseverance to carry out his new tasks.

I hope that the Committee will elect Mr. De Loecker as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. I wish him every success in his important task.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Austria for his nomination of Mr. Stéphane De Loecker of Belgium to the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

I wish to convey to our Austrian colleague Ms. Petra Schneebauer the Committee's appreciation for the distinction with which she carried out her duties, and for her valuable contribution to the work of the First Committee as Vice-Chairperson last year.

As there are no other nominations, may I take it that, again in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with a secret ballot and to declare Mr. Stéphane De Loecker elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I would like to express my sincere and warm congratulations to Mr. Lee Kie-cheon, Ambassador Milos Alcalay and Mr. Stéphane De Loecker for their elections as Vice-Chairmen of the First Committee. I am certain that, with their profound experience and good knowledge in the field of disarmament, they will make a valuable contribution to the activities of the Committee.

Election of the Rapporteur

The Chairman: I give the floor to the representative of the Slovak Republic, Mr. Rastislav Gabriel, the Rapporteur of the First Committee at the fifty-fifth session.

Mr. Gabriel (Slovakia): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau who have just been elected. I wish you every success in discharging your responsibilities and duties and pledge my delegation's full support to your efforts in the course of the coming weeks.

I have the honour and pleasure to present the nomination of Ambassador Sylvester Ekundayo Rowe, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, for the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee.

Mr. Rowe joined the Permanent Mission in 1997, after a distinguished career of more than 30 years in the United Nations Secretariat. He has been a member of the Sierra Leone delegation during the past four sessions of the General Assembly.

During the past four years, he has also served as his country's representative in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and in the Disarmament Commission. He was a Vice-Chairman of the Disarmament Commission in 1999 and a member of the Sierra Leone delegation to the 2000 Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Ambassador Rowe was a member of the Government's delegation to the 1999 peace talks with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel movement, which resulted in the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement. He was alternate representative to the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and he is currently the personal representative of the President of Sierra Leone to the preparatory process of the special session of the General Assembly on children.

A graduate of Syracuse University, Ambassador Rowe holds a doctorate degree in political science from the City University of New York. He is a member of the American Society of International Law and the author of articles and seminar papers on non-

alignment, United Nations peacekeeping and the legal aspects of peace and security activities in West Africa.

I propose Ambassador Rowe to be elected Rapporteur of the Committee.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Slovakia for his nomination of Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone for election to the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. I should also like to thank him for his significant contribution to the work of the Committee last year, during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, as Rapporteur of the First Committee.

Since there are no other nominations for the post of Rapporteur, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone elected as Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation?

I hear no objection.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I wish to express my sincere congratulations to Ambassador Sylvester Rowe upon his election as Rapporteur of the First Committee, and I now invite him to take the place reserved for him at this rostrum.

May I at this stage, while our colleague is taking his important position at the rostrum, draw the attention of the members of the Committee to rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which reads as follows:

> "Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session — or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation — after all the officers of the Committee have been elected."

We have just done this. Therefore, in the light of rule 110 of the rules of procedure, I call on the representative of Myanmar, Ambassador Kyaw Tint Swe, to address the First Committee.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): On behalf of the delegation of the Union of Myanmar, and on the personal behalf of my friend and colleague Ambassador U Mya Than, the outgoing Chairman of the First Committee, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. It is a great pleasure for me to see you at the helm of this important Committee. I am confident that your able leadership and your dedication to the cause of disarmament will ensure that our deliberations in the First Committee will reach a successful conclusion.

Let me also express my warm congratulations to the three Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Milos Alcalay, Permanent Representative of Venezuela; Mr. Stéphane De Loecker, Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium; Mr. Lee Kie-cheon, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea; and the Rapporteur, Mr. Sylvester Ekundayo Rowe, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, for their well-deserved election to their respective posts.

We are privileged to have a highly efficient team presiding over the affairs of the First Committee at this important juncture. In our quest for peace and security, the importance and urgency of achieving the goal of complete and total disarmament are greater now than ever.

I should like to assure the Committee that, in its endeavour to contribute to this noble cause, it can count on the full cooperation of my delegation. I should like also to take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude to all members of the delegations for their full support, without which we would not have had such a positive outcome during our chairmanship at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The Chairman: It is obviously a great source of satisfaction to me personally that the representative of Myanmar has pledged his cooperation with, and support for, the officers of this Committee in the performance of our duties.

I now call upon the representative of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Lee Kie-cheon.

Mr. Lee Kie-cheon (Republic of Korea): I am honoured to serve as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the First Committee. This Committee will assess the world security situation and deal with all disarmament issues for this year.

We have held lengthy discussions about the role of the First Committee. Some say that this Committee is valuable because of its global nature, because it is a

Committee in which universal membership is ensured and in which every Member State can address its own security and disarmament issues. On the other hand, others are of the view that this Committee is just another talk-shop where nothing substantive is produced and discussions on certain issues tend to be overly politicized.

I have been involved with United Nations issues for quite a few years, and in that time I have arrived at two conclusions. The first is that, compared with other Main Committees, the First Committee remains the most substantive, effective and focused. The second is that, whenever we deal with disarmament and security issues, we should keep the long term in mind due to the sensitive nature of these issues.

The large number of resolutions adopted by a vote clearly illustrates how much importance each delegation places on the issues discussed in this Committee.

Over the past year, we have witnessed more setbacks than gains in multilateral disarmament and arms control. We are now living in a world in which people and countries interact more closely thanks to advances in technology and globalization. However, some countries are still suffering from conflicts, and the international community is faced with the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

In addition, the terrorist attacks on the United States of America a few weeks ago have redefined the concept of a security threat in the twenty-first century. In the light of this, the First Committee should play its important role as a universal forum in which Member States can contribute to the promotion of peace and security through defining new security threats and revitalizing the multilateral disarmament and arms control process.

I will be very pleased to make a small contribution to strengthening the role of the First Committee in the coming year.

The Chairman: I look forward to the active cooperation of the representative of the Republic of Korea, Vice-Chairman of this Committee, and I am confident that I can count on his assistance.

I call on the representative of Venezuela, Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. Alcalay, (Venezuela), Vice-Chairman of the Committee (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank the representative of Uruguay most sincerely for his generous words addressed to me. I am also pleased sincerely to congratulate Uruguay on its splendid and effective work in the vice-chairmanship of the First Committee, alongside the other members of the Bureau who represented us here during the fifty-fifth regular session.

I also wish to say how truly honoured I feel in working with the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. André Erdös, the Ambassador of Hungary, in the important responsibility entrusted to us. Under his leadership and with his diplomatic experience, I and my colleagues from the Republic of Korea and Belgium, as well as the Rapporteur, the representative of Sierra Leone, will have to work with a great sense of responsibility and the importance of our task during this fifty-sixth session.

Indeed, as indicated by the Chairman in his opening statement, we may at times feel a strong sense of consternation. We began our work appropriately with a minute of silence. Our work in this Committee was launched on a good footing on 12 September, when the Security Council and the General Assembly shortly thereafter, unanimously, expressed through their resolutions the position of the international community.

This Committee must play an important role in contributing to international peace and security, because the agenda we have adopted sets out an extremely important task and challenge for us to pursue in our work. The eyes of the world are on the United Nations as it assumes that task. The United Nations will receive from this Committee and the General Assembly a vision of the issues that are at the very epicentre of the Organization's political work, as well as the legal vision we can provide, as indicated by a previous speaker.

I therefore wish to express our willingness to cooperate and join forces with all members of the Bureau and, in particular, with all members of the Committee in work which, I hope, will be fruitful and effectively accomplished. As we contribute to the effectiveness of this Committee, we will help to make our world safer, more peaceful and prosperous for all humanity.

Once again, I wish to express my personal emotion and enthusiasm, and those of the delegation of Venezuela, with respect to my election.

The Chairman: I am confident that I can count on the very active assistance and cooperation of the representative of Venezuela, Vice-Chairman of the Committee. At the same time, I also want to thank him very much for his important observations concerning the international context in which we are working in the fields of paramount importance of security and international security issues.

I call on the representative of Belgium, Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium), Vice-Chairman of the Committee (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by thanking wholeheartedly all the members of our Committee for having elected me to the Bureau. They may rest assured that I will do my utmost to contribute actively to the work of the Committee.

As has been noted, I have had an opportunity in my previous functions to specialize in particular in European defence matters. It was only last year, when I assumed my functions here in New York, that I was closely confronted with the issues of security at the global level that are addressed in the First Committee. My work is therefore a challenge that I intend to meet.

As the Ambassador of Venezuela has just recalled, the Committee at this session will clearly have to confront many great challenges in the new context created by the events of the morning of 11 September. The consequences of those attacks are considerable in all areas and it is obvious that they will have to be taken into account in the work of our Committee.

In conclusion, I am particularly proud and happy to work under your enlightened guidance, Mr. Chairman, and with our colleagues on the Bureau, the representatives of Venezuela, the Republic of Korea and Sierra Leone.

The Chairman: Again, I am confident that I can count on the very active assistance and cooperation of the representative of Belgium, Vice-Chairman of the Committee. I would mention, by the way, that, obviously, questions of security in Europe and in the world are closely interrelated today, given that we all live on the same planet. The experience that the representative of Belgium has accumulated in Europe will definitely be of great benefit to this Committee in the forthcoming weeks.

I call on the representative of Sierra Leone, Rapporteur of the Committee.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone), Rapporteur of the Committee: First of all, let me thank you, Sir, and members of this Committee for electing me to this very high office. My delegation, a small delegation, appreciates it very much and would like to pledge its cooperation with you and the other members of the Bureau. We will work earnestly to ensure that the Committee achieves its objectives during this session.

This may not be the most important Committee in the United Nations or the General Assembly, but I think it is significant that we call it the First Committee, because we believe that security is perhaps the most important issue and preoccupation for humanity. The events of 11 September also draw our attention to the work that we have to do and underline the fact that, when we talk about war and disarmament, we should think not only about nuclear weapons, but also about conventional weapons. It is significant also that the events of 11 September draw attention to another type of weapon, which I can call the "non-conventional" weapon.

We pledge our support. We have an uphill battle and I think this Committee can make a significant contribution to peace and security, not only in areas of conflict, but also in other parts of the world. We have a problem and we believe that the world is getting together. It is a smaller world. No matter what your military strength or might is, we live in an interdependent world and cooperation and good will should be the guideline of all our deliberations.

I hope that we shall work together and make a contribution to international security during the coming weeks.

The Chairman: I personally took note very attentively of those remarks on non-conventional weapons. As those remarks come from a representative of Sierra Leone, I can assure him that we all understand his preoccupations. I also want to thank him for his expression of willingness to cooperate closely with me and the other officers of the Committee. I am certain I express not only my own feelings but also those of the three Vice-Chairmen and the secretariat of the Committee when I say that it is our intention to

work as efficiently as possible, in close cooperation with the Rapporteur and the other members of the bureau during the current session on the many important issues that were mentioned here in anticipation of our substantive work, even if today's meeting is an organizational meeting.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I would like to draw the Committee's attention to document A/C.1/56/1, which contains a letter dated 19 September 2001 addressed to me by the President of the General Assembly, informing me that the General Assembly at its 3rd meeting decided to allocate 21 agenda items to the First Committee for its consideration: items 64 to 84. Despite the short time we had, in keeping with previous practice and assisted by the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Sattar, I undertook a number of informal consultations with individual delegations, to the extent possible, concerning this programme of work and timetable as they are contained in another document before the Committee, document A/C.1/56/CRP.1. The Committee may recall that in the course of our informal consultations on Tuesday, 2 October, I sought and received members' ad referendum agreement concerning this draft programme of work and timetable for the First Committee for the current session.

However, before proceeding to give a fuller account of the programme of work and timetable that are being proposed, I would like to indicate that the draft programme of work and the timetable have been prepared taking into account a number of initiatives proposed over the past several years, including the General Assembly's decision at its fifty-second session, decision 52/416 B, on the rationalization of the work of the First Committee. In this connection, I also took into account paragraph 36 of the annex to resolution 51/241, which reads as follows,

> "The First Committee and the Fourth Committee shall not meet simultaneously and may consider meeting in a sequential manner during the regular session of the General Assembly."

In accordance with the established practice, the First Committee commences its substantive work, as reflected in the draft programme of work and timetable, on Monday, 8 October 2001. As for the closing date of the work of the Committee, members will recall that, under the same decision of the General Assembly it was agreed that the First Committee should make every effort to conduct and conclude its substantive work, with the most efficient use of time and resources, in no less than 30 meetings and in a time frame not exceeding five weeks.

In view of that, I shall make every effort, with the Committee's assistance and cooperation, of course, to conclude the work of the Committee, as recommended by the General Committee, on Friday, 9 November 2001. I would like to say that concluding the work of the Committee early would enable the plenary of the General Assembly to consider the reports of the Main Committees, including this one, during the early part of December. Therefore, the First Committee's substantive session will run, as I have mentioned, from Monday, 8 October to Friday, 9 November, which gives the Committee a maximum of 31 meetings to consider the agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly.

I would like to point out here that last year the Committee had at its disposal the same number of meetings, of which it utilized a total of 28. Therefore, I think that if we make a concerted and sincere attempt to utilize our resources in an effective and efficient manner, we can indeed accomplish our task without undue difficulties during this regular session.

Following the consultations I mentioned here earlier, and also drawing upon the experience that has evolved over the years, I have arrived at the proposed programme of work and timetable contained in CRP.1. It will be observed that consideration of items allocated to the First Committee would proceed in three phases. This is also reflected in the draft programme of work and timetable.

We will have three phases of work. The Committee will begin its substantive session on Monday, 8 October with a single general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items which have been allocated to this Committee. A total of 11 meetings from 8 October to 19 October are devoted to this single general debate. This will be phase one. In this regard, I would like to appeal to delegations to kindly limit the time for the delivery of statements — if at all possible, and I hope it is possible — to 15 minutes, in order to enable all those delegations wishing to participate in the general debate

to do so within the short time allocated for that purpose.

I would also like to invite those delegations wishing to participate in the general debate to kindly inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible so that the Committee will be able to fully and constructively utilize its time and the conference resources available to it.

It should also be noted that the deadline for the closure of the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items will be Monday, 8 October at 6 p.m.

The second phase of the work of the Committee will be a thematic discussion on items as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions that will be submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items. So we will have a thematic discussion and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions in the second phase. This phase will cover the period from 22 October to 30 October. A total of 8 meetings will be allocated for that purpose. I hope that at that stage of the work of the Committee, delegations will make specific comments on the topics to be considered, so that we will not have a simple repetition of the general debate of the first phase. In this regard, I would like to inform members that in order to facilitate the work of the Committee and also to give sufficient time to delegations for consultations, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions on all disarmament and related international security items will be Thursday, 18 October at 6 p.m. With members' cooperation, I intend to maintain this deadline for the submission of the draft resolutions.

Delegations are encouraged to introduce draft resolutions as early as possible in order to enable others to seek necessary instructions from their capitals as well as to carry out adequate consultations. Furthermore, it is imperative that delegations submit those draft resolutions that could entail programme budget implications as early as possible in order to enable the Secretariat to make the necessary preparations on time. That will also enable the Committee to take on them with a view to meeting the mandatory deadline for their submission to the Fifth Committee.

I would also like to inform delegations that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of draft resolutions before they can be acted upon by the General Assembly. I accordingly ask them to keep in mind that financial aspect of our work.

The third phase of the work of this Committee — namely, action on all draft resolutions and decisions — will be from 31 October to 9 November. In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, a total of 11 meetings has been allocated to that third phase of the work of the Committee.

It is my intention to retain the voting procedure, which involves the grouping of draft resolutions by clusters, during this session. In due course I shall present to the Committee specific proposals concerning the matter of clustering.

Based on the programme of work and timetable now before the Committee, it is my belief that, as I stated earlier, we will be in a position to efficiently consider all the agenda items allocated to us within the available time and to successfully conclude our work by Friday, 9 November. That is a real possibility.

I should like to conclude these remarks concerning our programme of work and timetable by reminding delegations of the need to maintain the requisite degree of flexibility in the process of implementing them in order, if necessary, to enhance the effectiveness of the organization of work. Let us try to stick to our timetable and not lose sight of the flexibility that might be required as we begin the Committee's substantive work.

As I mentioned earlier, the programme of work and timetable were already considered and approved on an ad referendum basis at the informal meeting of the Committee on Tuesday, 2 October. Therefore, if there is no objection, I shall take it that the draft programme of work and timetable meet with the approval of the Committee and are adopted.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I should now like to draw the attention of the Committee to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly which affect the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in decision 34/401, in particular its provisions dealing with explanations of vote, rights of reply and budgetary and financial questions, which I intend to apply, with the cooperation of all members.

In order to make full use of the time and facilities available to the Committee, I intend, again with the Committee's cooperation and understanding, to open the meetings of the Committee promptly at 10 a.m. — perhaps at 10.05 a.m., but no later — and 3 p.m., respectively. I shall endeavour to close the meetings at 1 p.m. and t 6 p.m., respectively. In this regard, I appeal to all speakers, especially the first three speakers at any given meeting, to kindly be present in the Conference Room on time. I also urge all other members of the Committee to attend the meetings of the Committee on time and in person — to have a representative of their delegation present. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of punctuality in the interests of ensuring an effective and orderly organization of our work and achieving economy for the Organization. We are talking about the money of our own taxpayers all across the globe. I trust that delegations will heed this humble appeal from the Chair.

At the same time, I wish to point out that it is my intention to convene meetings of the Committee only when a sufficient number of speakers are inscribed on my list. As a general rule, we should have no fewer than five speakers inscribed on the list for a given meeting so that we can utilize the time and resources available to us in the most effective manner possible and obviate the need to close our meetings early for lack of speakers. Resources allocated to a meeting cancelled at an appropriate time may be released for other meetings held within or outside the framework of the First Committee.

In this connection, I would like to inform members that during the main part of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the First Committee utilized 67 per cent of its allocated conference resources and lost 22 hours and 20 minutes owing to late starts and early adjournments of meetings. As members will see, the First Committee's utilization factor of conference resources has been below the benchmark of 80 per cent. Again, I count on the cooperation of members in improving the situation and achieving the optimum utilization of conference services this year.

I have one more request of a practical nature — a request that is becoming quite traditional these days. I kindly ask colleagues to switch off their cellular phones during the proceedings of the Committee. If they want to make a phone call, they can always leave the room and return to their seats later. I hope that that request, too, will meet with the understanding and full support of delegations over the next couple of weeks.

I would also like to tell the Committee that our regular meeting place will be Conference Room 4, the traditional location of First Committee meetings. The organizational meetings — both the formal and informal parts — are a departure from our regular practice. Next time we meet, it will be in Conference Room 4.

I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Mohammad Sattar.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to draw attention to the following points concerning the organization of work.

During this session, the General Assembly has once again decided to depart from the rule that one quarter of the members must be present before a meeting of a Main Committee may be declared open and a debate permitted to proceed. The Assembly made this recommendation on the understanding that such a departure from the rule did not involve any permanent change in the relevant provisions of rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure, pertaining to a quorum for the opening of meetings, whereby a majority of members must be present for any decision to be taken.

As indicated in the programme of work and timetable, the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items will be closed on Monday, 8 October at 6 p.m.

A number of delegations have already indicated their intention to participate in the general debate, and the Secretariat has taken note of those requests. Delegations wishing to participate in the general debate are urged to kindly inscribe their names on the list of speakers at their earliest convenience, so that the Committee can fully and efficiently utilize the time and conference facilities available to it.

Mr. Chairman, as you noted in your statements, members of the Committee are requested to kindly submit draft resolutions, especially those resolutions with programme budget implications, as far in advance as possible, in order to allow sufficient time for preparation by the Secretariat of the estimate of expenditure and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, as well as to provide enough time for consultations.

This would undoubtedly facilitate the Secretariat's task in processing the draft resolutions in order to make them available to the Committee as soon as possible. In this regard, I would like to request members of the Committee to note that draft resolutions, amendments and the names of sponsors should be submitted to the secretariat of the Committee in writing, in order to ensure accuracy and to avoid any possible misunderstandings. Request for the use of conference rooms for group meetings should also be submitted in writing as early as possible, so that the necessary arrangements may be made in time.

I should also like to draw your attention to document A/C.1/56/INF.1, which will be issued within a few days. The document will provide, for purposes of information, a ready reference list of all documents of the First Committee issued as of 4 October 2001. That list will be updated as appropriate.

Delegations are also requested to kindly submit their lists of membership to the Secretariat as soon as possible, so that the Committee's membership list can be circulated as early as possible. Delegations are requested to kindly provide the Conference Officers with a minimum of 60 copies of all prepared statements for conference-servicing purposes. These, I would like to point out, are in addition to the copies required for any necessary general distribution among delegations.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to give you, as well as the other Officers of the Committee and all delegations, the firmest assurances of the support and cooperation of the secretariat of the First Committee and, of course, of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for your observations and your cooperation with the Chair. Let me say that I am looking forward to working with you in a good spirit of openness and efficacy over the next couple of few weeks. Therefore, I propose to adjourn this meeting now. As decided, the Committee will begin its substantive work on Monday, 8 October, at 10.00 a.m. in Conference Room 4.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.3

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-sixth session

First Committee

3rd meeting

Monday, 8 October 2001, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: The unprecedented terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September caused immense tragedy and destruction. To the host country, to our host city and to the victims, we offer our most sincere condolences. These acts, by targeting innocent civilians and civilian structures, not only challenged our sense of security, but also outraged our conscience. We welcome the view of the Secretary-General that these cruel and violent events make the work of the United Nations for peace — and I would add disarmament, non-proliferation and security — more important than ever. They should lead us to renew our adherence to the promotion of the rule of law, both inside our countries and in the international arena, including the body of disarmament and arms control agreements.

The horrifying deeds that we witnessed have already marked indelibly the beginning of the new millennium and the new century, which we celebrated with solemn commitment last year. These acts should reinforce the resolve of the Member States, reflected in the Millennium Declaration, to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons; to take concerted action in the field of conventional weapons, among others; to end the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons; and to rid the world of landmines.

Let us, then, continue our work during this session of the First Committee with new vigour to seek common purpose on the traditionally wide number of disarmament and international security items on the agenda. This can be our own valued contribution to realizing the fundamental goals of the United Nations. Here, for the next five weeks, we will be gathering as the expert forum on the steps to be taken towards disarmament and arms control. We should not underestimate the role that each and every one of us, and this Committee as a whole, can play to turn this place that is ours in the universe into a better and more secure home for mankind.

The unprecedented events of 11 September, questions such as the impact on disarmament issues of the type of attack that we saw and questions of how it was put into operation will be on our minds as we proceed to our agenda. We will also have to confront more acutely than ever before the stark reality of having to focus our attention in our deliberations on both State and non-State actors.

Let me refer in this context to the recently adopted Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which in its operative paragraph 4 notes the close connection between international terrorism and illegal arms trafficking and illegal movement of nuclear, chemical, biological and other potentially deadly materials, and emphasizes the need to enhance coordination of efforts on national, subregional, regional and international levels in order to strengthen a global response to this threat to international security. I believe that this is a time for soul-searching and self-scrutiny.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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To be realistic, we are faced this year with a continuing crisis in multilateral disarmament. Indeed, progress in important areas of multilateral disarmament has come to a near halt this past year in the fields of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. The utility of multilateralist approaches has been questioned. It is incumbent upon us to spotlight, support and promote the multilateral agenda, its great potential for and genuine contribution to international security.

As regards weapons of mass destruction, a chilling fact of the terrorist attacks on the United States was that not one weapon on the agenda of the Committee at this session was employed to bring about enormous loss of life, physical destruction and disruption of financial and economic activities in a powerful country. First, we must face what could have happened if the weapons that are on our agenda, especially nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, had been used. Secondly, we face the fact that these weapons still can and might be used accidentally, by misjudgement or miscommunication, or by design.

In the field of nuclear disarmament, despite the successful conclusion of the May 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the adoption of practical steps for systematic and progressive nuclear disarmament efforts, and notwithstanding the commitment made by world leaders at the Millennium Summit in September last year to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, progress in this area has been limited. I urge all States, and especially the nuclear-weapon States, to grasp the urgency of this message, to capitalize on present opportunities and to find ways to eliminate the dangers these weapons still represent for mankind.

Five years ago, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was opened for signature. Yet, the challenges that confront its entry into force persist, despite the fact that 161 States have signed the Treaty and 79 have ratified it, including 31 of the 44 States whose ratification is specifically required for the Treaty to become effective. It is hoped that the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty, which has been postponed to later this fall, will generate renewed efforts and approaches to promote the earliest entry into force of this Treaty.

The endeavours to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States concerned have been acknowledged as significant contributions not only to regional peace and stability but also to nuclear disarmament in general. Such efforts in various regions, bearing in mind the relevant guidelines of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, can effectively enhance international security. Progress made in this regard in 2000 in various parts of the world is to be welcomed and encouraged.

Sadly enough, after almost seven years of negotiations, the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was not able to conclude negotiations on a verification protocol. An internationally agreed protocol is of paramount importance. It would be a significant contribution to strengthening the Convention, enhancing its effectiveness, ensuring compliance through verification and achieving a higher degree of transparency. The forthcoming Fifth Review Conference of the BWC will address this issue. We hope that it will identify ways and means to continue this urgent task.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has played and continues to play a vital role in international efforts to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, to curb their proliferation and to achieve their elimination. While it is encouraging that 165 States have signed the Convention, it must be underlined that universal application of the Convention remains crucial to its effective implementation.

As is known, the issues related to plans concerning missile defences and their relationship to global security and strategic stability, their impact on current bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements and ongoing and future efforts in this field have been on the minds of many. The Panel of Governmental Experts set up at the previous General Assembly session, which is to prepare a report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects, began its work in August. We look forward to receiving the report of the Panel next year.

The use of outer space for peaceful purposes is expanding exponentially. In order to make full use of these exciting possibilities offered by new technology, but also to prevent space from becoming an arena of military confrontation, the existing legal regime needs to be reinforced and its effectiveness enhanced. Prevention of an arms race in outer space is of the utmost importance, in conformity with the provisions

of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

In July this year, the United Nations took a first significant step to address the scourge of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the illicit trade that feeds it. A programme of action to prevent, combat and eradicate such trade, adopted by consensus by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, set forth a range of challenges to the international community. Translating that political commitment into action, effectively implementing the practical measures at national, regional and international levels, developing partnerships and cooperation and providing the necessary assistance to affected countries will go a long way to meeting that challenge.

While the Programme of Action as adopted did not fully meet the expectations of all countries, it is nevertheless clear that we need to sustain the momentum generated by the Conference, its preparations and the two United Nations panels on small arms of 1997 and 1999. Relying on the follow-up process to the Conference, action should be encouraged by this Committee through the adoption of pertinent resolutions.

The Conference on Disarmament completed its third full year during which its work remained stalemated. Member States were not able to agree on a programme of work. Disagreement remained on the agenda items on nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The pre-eminent mission of the Conference is to hammer out agreements, treaties and conventions on disarmament. The Conference has produced remarkably complex conventions and treaties, which are the bread and butter of our efforts. The causes of the lack of progress extend beyond the walls of the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The consequences of the current stalemate represent a lost opportunity to pursue the creation of enduring legal commitments open to all States.

As regards anti-personnel landmines, there has been a marked decrease in mine victims — the first goal of all global efforts at mine action. Fewer countries are now producing anti-personnel mines and the number of stockpiled mines has decreased. However, anti-personnel landmines continue to threaten countries, people, economies and societies. For countries emerging from conflicts, the indiscriminate placement of landmines during times of conflict can be a grave problem and can undermine their efforts at economic and social progress.

A little more than a week ago, the States parties to the Mine Ban Convention met for a third annual meeting to assess the situation of mine action and review the status of the Convention. In December, the Third Annual Conference of States Parties to Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons — the Inhumane Weapons Convention — will take place. These continual follow-up actions have kept a permanent spotlight on the issues. The pioneering formation of partnerships between Governments and civil society, in the conference room and in the field, is an important asset and experience that can be applied to other, related activities in future, in the pursuit of the ultimate objective of eliminating these weapons.

A Group of Governmental Experts to Prepare a United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education was recently created. The Group is conducting a wide survey of current programmes and projects in the field and will present its report in 2002, with some forward-looking recommendations. As we contemplate the extremism, fanaticism and hatred that went into the acts committed on 11 September, and into many others carried out over the years, education in disarmament and peace must be viewed as a patient and long-term, yet indispensable, approach to confidence-building and mutual understanding in and among people and societies.

I have not tried to cover and exhaust all the multifaceted issues on our agenda of the First Committee, but rather I have sought to highlight some of the important questions that await us as we go into the next couple of weeks. Let me express my hope that in the extraordinary circumstances prevailing at this fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, all of us will make genuine efforts to come to grips with the many crucial security challenges of our time. Looking at our agenda, it is not an exaggeration to say that what is at stake here and now, in Conference Room 4 at United Nations Headquarters in the fall of 2001, is nothing less than the survival and secure existence of our human species.

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs

The Chairman: It is now my pleasure to give the floor to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, to make a statement.

Mr. Dhanapala (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): I begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to guide the work of the First Committee. Your distinguished career equips you well for the tasks ahead, a career that, in the disarmament area, features your prominent role in the historic 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as well as your chairmanship of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and pledge the fullest support of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in all your efforts to make this a productive session.

On 10 September 2001, the Secretary-General issued his annual message on the eve of what was to be the International Day of Peace. He urged people everywhere to try to imagine a world quite different from the one we know. He called on everybody to picture those who wage war laying down their arms and talking out their differences. He stated that this should be a day of global ceasefire and non-violence; and he closed with words of hope. He said,

> "Let us seize the opportunity for peace to take hold day by day, year by year, until every day is a day of peace".

The next morning, only an hour before the Secretary-General was planning to ring the Peace Bell, thousands of citizens from dozens of countries perished in acts of unmitigated brutality that defy description.

The challenge now facing the Committee, as it convenes in the shadow of that dark and ominous cloud, is to confront these new and old threats to international peace and security. At this critical juncture, when the peoples of the world stand together in repudiating mass terrorism, we must all work together to build on this remarkable display of unity. This is a time for cooperation, for reaffirming the rule of law, for recognizing common threats, and for acknowledging the extent to which our common security depends upon justice, fundamental human rights and the equitable development of all societies. For the First Committee it is particularly a time for reinforcing the roads and bridges leading to the fulfilment of multilateral disarmament commitments, while exploring new paths to reach the same destinations. It is, in short, a time to resume the work of realizing the vision described in the Secretary-General's message on what was to have been the International Day of Peace.

Only history will decide how much of a defining moment 11 September will be. But history will certainly not absolve us for failing to learn the lessons of that unspeakable tragedy. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his address to the General Assembly on 1 October, stated that

> "While the world was unable to prevent the 11 September attacks, there is much we can do to help prevent future terrorist acts carried out with weapons of mass destruction". (*A/56/PV.12*)

For us in the disarmament community he set out several guidelines for future actions that I hope delegations will consider carefully. Some specific initiatives that merit serious consideration include, first, the need to expand the membership of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material while strengthening controls over nuclear facilities and the storage and transportation of nuclear materials.

A second initiative is the need for new efforts to negotiate a convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. The recent terrorist attacks should add new urgency to those efforts.

A third initiative is the need for a global database based on publicly available materials on acts, threatened acts or suspected acts of terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction. The Department for Disarmament Affairs is in contact with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on many of these issues and is prepared, if so mandated, to establish such a database.

The starting point for the work of the Committee must be the sobering realization that last month's tragedy could have been so much worse had nuclear, biological or chemical weapons been used, as you have noted, Mr. Chairman. The objective facts require that we be neither alarmist sores of panic nor complacent

do-nothings. We do, however, have a duty to protect innocent citizens throughout the world by reinforcing the multilateral disarmament regime.

Many of the deadliest super-weapons remain difficult to manufacture due to the unique characteristics of the weapons' materials, improvements in methods of detecting the production or testing of such weapons, and the technical problems involved in converting dangerous materials into effective deliverable weapons. The world community must do all it can to raise these hurdles while strengthening the fundamental norms against the possession or use of such weapons. The best way to accomplish that is through the active pursuit of a robust disarmament agenda. Of one thing we must be clear: in the disarmament area there is no going back to business as usual.

The agenda of the First Committee has always been challenging; yet the tasks ahead are more critical than ever. Many of those challenges, however, existed well before the tragic events of 11 September. At the conclusion of its thirty-seventh session, at Geneva last July, the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters concluded that there currently exists a crisis in multilateral disarmament diplomacy. Disarmament is facing difficult times. There is no doubt that its future rests heavily upon a strong level of understanding and support in civil society.

Yet today we see signs of private foundations and other funding agencies moving out of the field of disarmament or reducing their commitments to this goal. As funding grows scarce — a problem aggravated by the turbulent global financial markets — key groups in civil society are finding it increasingly difficult to sustain their work on disarmament issues. In academia we find all too few articles in serious scholarly journals on disarmament per se, and very few new doctoral dissertations that deal directly with disarmament. We find the news media focussing on the glare of current conflicts rather than on the typically slow and incremental process of eliminating the weapons used in such conflicts, or eliminating the weapons that could even destroy the world. These trends must be reversed. At a minimum, more funding must be made available to non-governmental groups working in the field of disarmament.

On an inter-State level, we find few Governments with offices specifically devoted to disarmament issues. New Zealand still has the distinction of having the only minister for disarmament. We see a flourishing global arms market. The United States Congressional Research Service estimates the total value of arms transfers from 1993 through 2000 to be around $303 billion. Almost 70 per cent of those arms were imported by developing countries. Meanwhile, global military expenditures are again on the rise, amounting last year to an estimated $800 billion. This growth in the arms trade and military spending contrasts with the terms of Article 26 of the Charter, which refer to the least diversion of the world's human and economic resources for armaments.

At times it appears — certainly in terms of United Nations budgetary procedures — that we are seeing instead the least diversion of resources for disarmament. It goes without saying that the smallest department in the United Nations is the Department for Disarmament Affairs, which is now seeking a modest increase in the 2002-2003 biennium budget that is before this session of the General Assembly. It is also not uncommon to read of financial problems and resource shortages in key treaty-based organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The treaties that constitute the global legal regime for disarmament are also seriously incomplete. None of the key treaties prescribing the elimination of weapons of mass destruction has universal membership, and undocumented allegations of non-compliance continue to be heard among the States parties, eroding confidence in the various treaty regimes. Many important treaties have still not entered into force, including START II and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, whose members will soon meet in New York to consider ways of accelerating the ratification process. With respect to the Biological Weapons Convention, many years of effort to conclude a protocol to strengthen this key treaty have ended abruptly. The treaty's next five-year Review Conference, scheduled to convene next month in Geneva, provides an opportunity to revisit this issue. It must not be missed.

With regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), while it is still too early to predict the fate of the "13 steps" to nuclear disarmament agreed at the NPT 2000 Review Conference, it is fair to say that delegates attending

next year's first Preparatory Committee meeting for the Treaty's 2005 Review Conference will certainly expect hard evidence of a good-faith effort to implement each of these important goals.

The elimination of landmines is another very important international disarmament activity, given that they continue to impede the development and security of populations in almost one third of the world's countries. Last month, I attended the third annual meeting of the States parties to the Mine Ban Convention in Managua, Nicaragua, convened by the United Nations pursuant to resolution 55/33 V. Despite the uncertainties of air travel at the time, the event was marked both by an impressive attendance — more than 90 States — and by positive results that augur well for the future implementation of that Convention.

The second annual conference of States parties to Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will take place later this year. It will consider several proposals addressing the scope of the Convention, compliance issues, small-calibre weapons and ammunition, anti-vehicle mines, and the problem of explosive remnants of war. The Secretary-General is committed to fulfilling his responsibilities as Depositary to both of these important legal instruments.

The global legal regime is particularly underdeveloped in the fields of conventional weapons; small arms and light weapons; the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and missiles and other delivery vehicles for weapons of mass destruction. Some of these problems, however, have been getting increased attention in recent years. General Assembly resolution 55/33 A has asked the Secretary-General to prepare a report, with the assistance of a panel of governmental experts, on the issue of missiles in all its aspects, and to submit this report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

China has introduced in the Conference on Disarmament a proposal for a treaty banning the deployment of weapons in space. The Programme of Action successfully adopted at the July 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects provides a blueprint for international cooperation that may eventually lead to binding international norms. A question remains, however: will the events of 11 September encourage States to consider once again the need to prohibit the transfer of military-grade small arms and light weapons to non-State actors?

The chronic deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament — the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum — is another serious problem that demands an urgent solution, one that will be found only in the political will of Member States to begin negotiations. Perhaps the new spirit of cooperation that has been rekindled by the events of 11 September will help to breathe new life into this vitally important international institution.

Despite the difficult challenges ahead for international peace and security, disarmament remains an attractive alternative to both deterrence and military defensive measures as responses to these challenges. One of the most important contributions of the United Nations in this field is the gathering and dissemination of information about worldwide progress in achieving important arms-limitation and disarmament goals. On behalf of Member States, the Department for Disarmament Affairs maintains the Register of Conventional Arms, which keeps track of the production and trade of seven categories of major weapons systems. This year more than 100 Governments made submissions to the Register, the highest level of participation since the Register was created nine years ago.

More Member States are also using the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. This year, nearly 60 have reported data using this instrument, almost double the average number from previous years. Last July, the States attending the United Nations small arms Conference assigned the Department for Disarmament Affairs the responsibility of collating and circulating data on the implementation of the Programme of Action agreed at that Conference. The Department's role as the coordination centre in the Secretariat of all United Nations activities in the field of small arms was specifically welcomed in General Assembly resolution 55/33 F.

As requested by the General Assembly, the Department is also working with a group of outside experts to prepare a study on disarmament and non-proliferation education, which the Secretary-General will submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. Those experts have met twice this year and are making progress in identifying constructive initiatives

at the primary, secondary, university and postgraduate levels of education, in all regions of the world. Through its many symposiums, newsletters, databases, monographs, films, posters, brochures, lectures to student groups, and intern and fellowship programmes; a regularly updated web site; and its new 454-page annual *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, the Department for Disarmament Affairs is giving its educational responsibilities every bit of the attention they deserve, despite the heavy strain on its limited resources. I am glad to see some samples of the Department's publications on the desks of delegations.

I would like to take this occasion to invite all members of this Committee to attend a special symposium on "Terrorism and Disarmament" that the Department will host on the afternoon of 25 October, involving experts from the IAEA, the OPCW and other institutions. This timely event will examine the specific contributions that disarmament can make in addressing global terrorist threats.

This Committee faces the difficult task of moving beyond the tears, the grief and the anger from 11 September and from all acts of terrorism in all countries to the re-establishment of a just and stable foundation for international peace and security. The Committee must adhere to its long-standing priorities. It must keep its focus on discovering the ways and means of eliminating all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons.

The Committee has before it many draft resolutions that point the way ahead in achieving this basic aim. As it considers these draft resolutions, member States may also wish to consider in their deliberations some broader questions that concern the disarmament machinery of the United Nations. Recent events, combined with the current crisis in multilateral disarmament diplomacy, may also suggest that the time has come to revisit the proposal to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

There is one question, however, that surely does not belong on this agenda. That is the question of whether the primary focus of this Committee should change from disarmament to merely the regulation or limitation of arms. There is, of course, an important need for efforts on both fronts. When it comes to weapons of mass destruction, there is no question that the world would be far better off pursuing the total and verifiable elimination of such weapons than in perpetuating the fantasy that their possession can be permanently limited to an assortment of exclusive, but by no means leak-proof clubs. By contrast, controls over conventional weapons are, in general, better pursued by transparent regulatory approaches that limit the numbers or characteristics of agreed weapons systems — approaches that are consistent with the inherent right of self-defence in Article 51 of the Charter. Together, both approaches complement each other well in serving the common interests of international peace and security.

Much ground has already been tilled. In their Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the States parties reaffirmed their common conviction that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and that includes a terrorist use of nuclear weapons.

It is not at all unrealistic or inappropriate for this Committee to keep its focus on the search for absolute guarantees. The more it searches, the more it will return to disarmament, not regulation, as the solution for weapons of mass destruction. In addressing such weapons, the Committee should explore ways of bringing disarmament to the world or of bringing the world to disarmament. But disarmament must be done. Members of this Committee should ask not for whom the peace bell tolls — it tolls for them.

The Chairman: I thank Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his important and very inspiring statement. I am sure that this statement and his guidance will contribute significantly to the deliberations of this Committee.

Agenda items 64 to 84

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation, on your election as Chairman of this Committee. You can, of course, count on our full trust and support as you carry out the task entrusted to you. I also wish to express our appreciation to Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar for the excellent way in which he guided the Committee's work at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I wish at the outset to join you in reiterating Mexico's strong condemnation of the terrorist attacks of 11 September in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. Through you, I ask our friends and colleagues in the United States delegation to convey to the federal and local authorities, as well as to the relatives of the victims, the very sincere condolences and sense of solidarity of the Mexican delegation.

The situation we are facing today in the field of disarmament and international security underscores the urgent need to articulate an appropriate response to the new challenges. We must build consensuses and design new mechanisms based on rules and norms that effectively address the real needs of nations and societies facing non-traditional security threats.

We feel that the road ahead is clearly mapped out and consists in further developing and strengthening international law. Our response to the new challenges must be based on concrete actions that strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime and guarantee genuine security for nations and individuals.

Mexico is convinced of the need to make optimum use of the mechanisms and instruments at the disposal of the international community and the United Nations and to complement them, when necessary, by identifying concrete measures for achieving a new security based on cooperation. Strict respect for international law and accountability for commitments undertaken in the field of disarmament and security will be key elements of that response.

It has been over a year since we adopted by consensus the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in which nuclear-weapon States made an unequivocal commitment entirely to eliminate their nuclear arsenals and in which a series of practical measures were agreed upon with the goal of making systematic and steady progress towards nuclear disarmament.

We regret that the implementation of the measures agreed has been minimal or non-existent. No progress has been made in the negotiation of other important measures, such as pledges of non-first-use of nuclear weapons between nuclear-weapon States; legally binding security assurances of the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States; the cancellation of the nuclear weapon state of alert; and the removal of nuclear warheads from their delivery systems.

Other pending matters include the negotiation of a legally binding instrument to regulate, monitor and prohibit the thousands of tactical nuclear weapons that, because of their technical characteristics, carry the greatest risk of accidental or improper use, and the involvement of the other nuclear-weapon States, in addition to the Russian Federation and the United States, in the nuclear disarmament process.

We share the conviction that the unilateral declarations made by those two countries in 1991 should be consolidated in a legally binding international instrument in order to make effective progress towards the reduction of the nuclear arsenals of the two countries. The First Committee can and should play a useful role in this respect.

Mexico wishes to emphasize that collective action by the international community is crucial for maintaining international peace and security, and that unilateral, bilateral and plurilateral measures in the area of nuclear disarmament must be complemented and strengthened by multilateral initiatives within the framework of legally binding international treaties of universal scope.

Despite the decision of the international community to give priority to the full implementation of the nuclear disarmament programme agreed upon in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the lack of progress is without doubt inconsistent with the unequivocal commitment undertaken by nuclear-weapons States to completely eliminate nuclear arsenals. The irreversibility of nuclear disarmament measures, transparency with respect to nuclear arsenals and nuclear programmes, and reports on the degree of compliance with commitments undertaken are still fully valid today as criteria for measuring progress made in this field.

The international debate on the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems has further complicated the process of promoting understanding and easing tensions among nuclear-weapons States. The link that some countries have made between those programmes and the so-called international strategic stability has served to bog down multilateral negotiations on arms control and disarmament even further.

Mexico recognizes the importance of the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems to the promotion and maintenance of international stability and as the basis for future reductions in strategic offensive weapons. We appeal to all States to refrain from taking any action that could trigger a new arms race.

We must abandon obsolete doctrines of deterrence and mutually assured destruction and recognize that the best way of promoting international stability is to eliminate nuclear weapons. Mexico therefore considers that the issue of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is at the top of the agenda of international disarmament. Mexico will continue promoting the adoption of measures aimed at consolidating the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, among them, the universalization and full implementation of the various relevant international treaties. Mexico will also continue to promote the negotiation of new bilateral and multilateral agreements aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons as a step towards the agreed goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The creation of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely entered into promotes global and regional peace and security, strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mexico supports the strengthening of the regimes established by the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, as well as the Antarctic Treaty, and reiterates its call on States that have not yet done so to ratify those treaties and their respective protocols. We wish to reiterate to the five States of Central Asia our support for a conclusion to their negotiations aimed at establishing a new nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region. We also encourage Mongolia to continue with the efforts it has undertaken in this area.

We also support a nuclear weapons free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas and the implementation of new measures to promote cooperation among the organs created under the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the commencement of preparatory work for an international conference of States parties and signatories to those treaties in support of their common objectives.

Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, progress has been made towards its ratification. But new challenges have also emerged to global peace and security that pose obstacles to reaching the number of ratifications needed for its entry into force. The entry into force of the Treaty is one of the practical measures identified within the framework of the NPT to ensure constructive and steady progress towards nuclear disarmament and is a key element for evaluating the degree of compliance with the unequivocal commitments to completely eliminate nuclear weapons. In this context, there is a need for absolute and unqualified compliance with a total moratorium on any type of nuclear testing until the comprehensive ban provided for in the Treaty enters into force.

We are confident that the upcoming Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will provide a favourable forum for the international community to reaffirm its support for the Treaty, as well as for efforts aimed at obtaining the number of ratifications needed for the Treaty's entry into force.

Mexico regrets that after more than six years of negotiations, during which the international community invested a great deal of effort and resources, it has not been possible to fulfil the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, which is to elaborate a protocol for verification of compliance with this legal instrument.

The international community shares the objective of strengthening the Convention through the design of a mechanism to verify compliance with all the provisions of the treaty, including measures to promote and implement the treaty. The next review conference must provide an opportunity to reaffirm the validity and force of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group and to identify and determine the future course of action aimed at strengthening the Convention.

We reiterate our conviction that unilateral or partial verification and control regimes are insufficient and that multilateral negotiations undertaken within the framework of the Convention are the best means of preserving and strengthening the banning of biological weapons.

The recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects demonstrated the political will of Member States to combat the illicit trafficking in and manufacture of this type of weapon.

We would like to express our appreciation to all the delegations that demonstrated the flexibility needed to make possible the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We would like in particular to congratulate Ambassador Camilo Reyes of Colombia for his patience, wisdom and tenacity, which were key factors in the successful outcome of the Conference.

The immediate task before us is the full implementation of the measures contained in the Programme of Action. We reiterate our readiness to undertake all bilateral, regional and international cooperation efforts so as to ensure such implementation.

We hope that discussions will continue between Member States on those issues that it was not possible to include in the Programme of Action. We are convinced that, to the extent that consensus can be reached on the need to deal with the issue of the prohibition of arms transfers to non-State actors and the issue of legislation on restrictions on the possession by civilians of small arms and light weapons, we will succeed in having a significant impact on the illicit trade in these weapons.

Since 1980, when the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons was adopted, Mexico has advocated the further refinement of that Convention by including the prohibition of certain categories of weapons that are not currently regulated, as well as incorporating a review mechanism. To this end, during the second Review Conference of the Convention, which is scheduled to take place in December, we will support amending the Convention in order to expand its scope of application and the adoption of new protocols to prohibit the production, stockpiling, use and transfer of conventional weapons which, by their nature or design, may have devastating humanitarian consequences, such as anti-vehicle mines and explosive remnants of war. We will also work towards the inclusion of an effective, strict and universal implementation mechanism.

At the Third Conference of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, it was noted that the number of countries producers of anti-personnel mines has declined; that exports of these arms had practically ceased, that more than 20 million mines had been destroyed in 55 countries, and that there had been a significant reduction in the number of victims and an increase in the level of resources allocated to action programmes to eradicate anti-personnel landmines.

Mexico appeals to the major producers of anti-personnel landmines to accede to the Convention and to the States parties to the Convention to conclude their mine destruction programmes within the established time frames, as well as to respect minimum thresholds for these weapons. Coordinated action by the international community is essential to achieve the complete elimination of anti-personnel landmines and to increase the level of financial resources available for activities related to the implemenation of the Convention.

The long-standing inability to reach agreement on a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament, which was in evidence again this year, reflects the complexity and differences that exist with respect to the definition of priorities in the area of arms control and disarmament at the global level. This was shown by the fact that it was possible only to appoint special coordinators to deal with questions of procedure, despite the efforts and dedication of the then Chairman of the Conference.

Despite the mandate provided by numerous United Nations resolutions, and the urgent appeal issued by the sixth Review Conference of the NPT to establish subsidiary organs and begin negotiations on nuclear disarmament, fissile material and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the absence of political will on the part of some States has paralysed the only multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament.

Recent events should lead us to reflect on the urgent need for the international negotiating machinery to function adequately in order to improve and strengthen the instruments on which the disarmament and non-proliferation regime and, thus, international security, is built.

Mexico issues an urgent appeal to all States to overcome the paralysis that has gripped the Conference on Disarmament. Such immobility is ethically

unsustainable. We must rediscover the political will to tackle the disarmament agenda in that forum so as to facilitate the negotiation of issues that, given the current international situation, must not be evaded. The future of international security will depend on the response to that appeal.

Mr. Krokhmal (Ukraine): At the outset, I should like, on behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, to convey to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee, which plays an outstanding role within the United Nations disarmament machinery. I should also like to pay tribute to the members of the Bureau. You can count on the full support and cooperation of my delegation in the pursuit of a productive and successful session.

The current global peace and security environment presents a mixture of tremendous opportunities and grave challenges, as clearly evidenced by the recent developments in the world. In this regard, Ukraine expresses its profound indignation at the unprecedented terrorist acts perpetrated on 11 September in the United States. We strongly condemn those horrifying attacks and call on the members of the international community to unite and redouble their efforts with a view to combating terrorism in all its aspects. These tragic events have naturally focused the attention of Governments and the public on terrorism and the means used by terrorists. They have raised the question of how Governments can protect their countries and citizens against unconventional weapons and unconventional methods of warfare, whether employed by State or non-State actors.

In this context it is clear that the issues of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament remain among the imperative priorities for humankind, as well as a critical element of the United Nations strategy for peace and security in the twenty-first century. These tasks will require collective efforts on the part of the international community. In our view, the First Committee can make a substantive contribution to such efforts.

Among the most important issues to which I believe we must draw specific attention during this session of the Committee are the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the resumption of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty and a subsidiary body for substantive discussion of nuclear disarmament issues; the viability of the anti-ballistic missile Treaty; the future of the START process; the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention and the implementation of the final document of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In the light of the latest events, I deem it necessary to maintain the positive impetus given to international efforts in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament in the early 1990s and to overcome the regressive trends of the late 1990s in this sphere.

In this regard, I should mention Ukraine's essential contribution to the process of practical disarmament and to the maintenance of international peace and security. Having voluntarily given up its nuclear arsenal, Ukraine has proved itself to be a strong supporter of, and an active participant in, nuclear disarmament and the strategic arms elimination process.

Ukraine regards the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and nuclear disarmament. Therefore, it is of critical importance to confirm the validity of the results achieved by the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which represents an important beginning in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and includes an unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to complete nuclear disarmament.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is generally recognized as one of the key elements of strategic stability in the world. I am pleased to mention that Ukraine ratified the CTBT last year. Our State stands for the further strengthening of the Treaty and urges all States to ratify this document, first and foremost those countries whose ratification is required for the Treaty's entry into effect.

We are convinced that the best way to achieve nuclear disarmament and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons is to enhance the efficiency of the

NPT and CTBT Treaties and to make them universal. Ukraine believes that the universalization of the non-proliferation regime on the basis of these two Treaties should remain one of the priority tasks of the international agenda, since it will contribute greatly to the strengthening of peace and security all over the world.

It should also be mentioned that since the First Committee's previous session certain important events have taken place in Ukraine in the field of arms control and disarmament. The last inspection on Ukrainian territory was recently conducted within the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty framework.

Ukraine has also ratified the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the ABM Treaty, signed in New York in 1997. We are closely following developments relating to the ABM Treaty. Taking into account the fact that the Treaty played an important role in past decades in preserving strategic stability as part of a system of international legal documents, Ukraine proceeds on the basis of the need to ensure a non-conflict adaptation of the ABM Treaty in the context of the problems that arise from the continuing proliferation of missiles, missile technologies and weapons of mass destruction. We are convinced that the revision of the ABM Treaty must not result in deterioration of the general strategic situation or lead to a resumption of the arms race. Ukraine considers it exceptionally important that a mutual understanding be reached between the Russian Federation and the United States on this issue.

Bilateral nuclear negotiations between the United States and the Russian Federation are regarded by Ukraine as constituting the backbone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We believe that the implementation of the START II Treaty and the beginning of the START III process will pave the way towards further, deeper reductions in the nuclear arsenals of both sides.

Another step which would constitute an effective measure of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is the conclusion of the fissile material cut-off treaty. Ukraine supports the resumption of negotiations on the cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, and urges States to show flexibility and to reconsider once again their positions in this area.

While great challenges still lie ahead of us, we would note in a positive vein a number of important developments, in particular, in combating illicit small arms trafficking and the proliferation of such weapons as well as in regard to the elimination of certain types of conventional weapons, including anti-personnel landmines.

The most remarkable event in this sphere was the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was a unique opportunity for the international community to conduct a comprehensive analysis of this multifaceted problem and develop a strategy for coordinating collective efforts in that field. We welcome the Conference's final document, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. We believe that the process of implementing the Programme of Action will require the common efforts of all Member States and their civil societies, as well as of international and regional organizations. We need to draw priority attention to the enhancement of the effectiveness of the Security Council's arms embargoes, the establishment of effectively functioning national export control systems and the strengthening of international cooperation between border, customs and law enforcement bodies.

I also highly commend the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which could constitute a significant step towards the elaboration and implementation of global measures in this area.

We welcome the adoption of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the International Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Bearing in mind the transnational nature of this problem, we are deeply convinced that the United Nations should continue to play a leading role in the fight against the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, as well as in restraining their proliferation.

The year 2001 has become a landmark for Ukraine in terms of initiating the process of the destruction of its huge anti-personnel landmine stockpiles. As a signatory State to the Ottawa Convention on the total ban of anti-personnel landmines, Ukraine remains devoted to the Convention's ideals, as is clearly evidenced by its

consequent policy in the sphere of anti-personnel landmine destruction.

In conclusion, let me express our hope that this session will give further momentum to the ongoing international efforts towards the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and towards limiting the numbers of conventional weapons to the minimum levels required for self-defence, thus paving the way to a more secure and safer world. We believe that the First Committee will continue to play an outstanding role in this direction.

Mr. Nene (South Africa): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the delegations of the New Agenda Initiative countries: Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden.

First let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption at the chair of the First Committee at this year's session.

On behalf of the New Agenda delegations, we reiterate our condemnation of the unspeakable terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September. We share the sense of outrage and pain, especially for the loss of so many innocent lives.

I now have the honour to present the content of a communiqué released this morning by the Foreign Ministers of the New Agenda countries:

> "The Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden have, in their preparation for the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly, evaluated progress on nuclear disarmament and considered further measures to be taken in pursuit of their joint initiative to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.
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> "They recalled the substantial outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). They noted with satisfaction the level of support given to the New Agenda resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 2000. They also recalled the constructive dialogue with the nuclear-weapon States that was started at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and agreed to continue this dialogue with a view to accelerating negotiations on all fronts, leading to nuclear disarmament.
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> "The New Agenda Ministers were determined to pursue the complete implementation of the agreements reached at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. That outcome provides the requisite blueprint to achieve nuclear disarmament. Further progress on disarmament must be a major determinant in achieving and sustaining international stability.
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> "The Ministers made it clear that they remain deeply concerned at the continuing possibility that nuclear weapons could be used. They welcomed the indications of further cuts by the United States and the Russian Federation to their nuclear arsenals. They noted that, despite past achievements in bilateral and unilateral reductions, the total number of nuclear weapons deployed and stockpiled still amounts to tens of thousands.
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> "The Ministers also expressed their concern that the commitment to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security policies and defence doctrines had not so far been pursued. This lack of progress is inconsistent with the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. And, in the context of disarmament, it clearly represents a failure to grasp the opportunities of the post-cold-war security environment.
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> "The Ministers reaffirmed that any presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States would be incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and with the broader goal of the maintenance of international peace and security.
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> "The seven Ministers looked forward to the resumption in 2002 of the NPT review process, where States would need to account for progress in achieving nuclear disarmament. Accountability will be assessed in the context of the reports that States parties have agreed to submit. To date, there have been few advances in the implementation of the 13 steps agreed to at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. A particular disappointment was the continuing failure of the Conference on Disarmament to deal with nuclear disarmament and to resume negotiations on fissile

material. The expectations of progress that had come in 2000 have not yet been met.

"The Ministers expressed concern at challenges to the non-proliferation regime. They urged the international community to redouble its efforts to achieve universal adherence to the NPT and not to take any steps that would undermine the determination of the international community to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. They repeated their call on those three States — India, Pakistan and Israel — which are not parties to the NPT and which operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States and to place their facilities under the comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency agreements.

"The Ministers stressed that the participation of the international community as a whole is central to the maintenance and enhancement of international peace and stability. International security is a collective concern requiring collective engagement. They emphasised that unilateral and bilateral nuclear disarmament measures complement the treaty-based multilateral approach towards nuclear disarmament. They underlined also that internationally negotiated treaties in the field of disarmament have made a fundamental contribution to international peace and security. The importance of early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remained crucial in this context.

"Ministers emphasised the imperative of irreversibility in arms control. They expressed the view that international treaties in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must be respected and that all obligations flowing from those treaties must be duly fulfilled.

"Ministers stressed the importance of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) in the promotion and maintenance of international stability and as a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive weapons. Abrogation of the ABM Treaty could hold grave consequences for the future of global security. Further reductions of nuclear arsenals to lower limits must not be put at risk. They called upon all States to refrain from any action that could lead to a new nuclear arms race or that could impact negatively on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

"The Ministers reaffirmed their determination to pursue the New Agenda initiative with continued vigour. They agreed that the priority would be to pursue their initiative in the context of the forthcoming NPT review process beginning in 2002. The 2000 NPT undertakings on nuclear disarmament had been given. Implementation of them was now imperative."

On behalf of the New Agenda partners, I request that the ministerial communiqué be circulated as an official document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. A copy has been provided to the Secretariat for this purpose.

The Chairman: I have taken due note of the request of the representative of South Africa and I will take the necessary steps to have the ministerial communiqué of the New Agenda partners circulated as an official document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. I wish you every success. We are certain that our debate will be crowned with success, thanks to your skill, expertise and the efforts of the excellent team that comprises the Bureau to help you fulfil your tasks. My delegation wishes to assert its readiness to fully cooperate with you to ensure the success of your work.

We wish also to express our appreciation to Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his thorough statement and to thank him for his efforts on behalf of the cause of disarmament throughout the world.

We are commencing our general debate in this session in a sad environment, following the tragic terrorist attack that we all witnessed on 11 September. On this occasion my delegation wishes once again to express its condolences and sympathy to the people of America and the families of the victims. The entire world condemned the bloody, horrible events of 11 September.

What is important is to fight international terrorism not only through armed force but also by

dealing with the causes and motivations that lead to terrorism. Terrorism is a vicious circle that needs to be strangled at the source.

This disaster teaches us lessons, as has been said by our Rapporteur, who is from Sierra Leone, regarding unconventional weapons that we may or may not be familiar with. Such weapons are more dangerous than nuclear weapons. Weapons of mass destruction and anti-ballistic missile systems can be ineffective or useless, because conflicts have changed in character. It is therefore necessary to adopt urgent strategies and policies within the context of the United Nations and without the use of double standards in order to examine the causes of conflicts and instability and resolve them once and for all. We need to clearly define international terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, which must be vigorously condemned and distinguish between it and the legitimate struggle of oppressed people against foreign occupation of their national territories.

We feel that regional, national and international conflicts and disparities in the world order have an impact on our global village, which is becoming increasingly globalized. Insecurity, conflict, environmental disasters, malnutrition, poverty, famine, epidemics, racism, occupation and repression all affect the world as a whole, and no country can be sheltered from these scourges. It also means that concerted efforts must be made to find political ways, and determination, to deal with these questions. If a fire breaks out in our global village, it is necessary for all to unite efforts to put it out before the flames extend to other parts of the village.

In their Millennium Declaration our Heads of State and Government committed themselves to eliminating weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, in order to reduce the universal dangers posed by light weapons and anti-personnel mines. As was said in paragraph 75 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/1),

> "Uncertainties about the status of the strategic relationship between the leading nuclear-weapon Powers and continuing divergence of views among States on priorities and perspectives, however, continue to inform the debate and block further movement on global security and disarmament."

Despite international efforts to achieve progress in disarmament — either in nuclear weapons or small light weapons — global military expenditures are still increasing, and the annual costs now exceed $800 billion, or $130 per person on our planet. Other reports indicate that the trade in weapons increased for the third consecutive year, by 8 per cent last year. Expenditures totalled $36.9 billion. For the United States alone, the figure is $18.6 billion, which is one half of all sales. Sixty-eight percent of these sales are directed to developing countries, the majority of which suffer from poverty, famine, diseases and severe lack of official development assistance.

In the Arab region, military expenditures have increased consistently. The region has received 38 per cent of its imports in weapons. This occurred despite the fact that resources devoted to development had to be diverted. This means that the resources devoted to development have been diverted to the acquisition of weapons for defence because of the presence of a cruel, aggressive, brutal entity forcefully implanted in the region, possessing conventional and nuclear weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction. This entity is determined to further expand and pursue its policies of oppression, occupation and settlement-building. It is opposed to all international efforts. It refuses to go along with international treaties and instruments and to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty; just as it opposes making the area a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Furthermore, the land of this entity has become the largest arsenal and arms depot in the world.

The process of disarmament is going through a real crisis in view of the accumulation of nuclear weapons and the absence of effective measures to restore practical confidence in the area of conventional weapons. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is a very important measure to consolidate trust and needs to be broadened to ensure transparency so that it can obtain global information on conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, and can become more global and more balanced.

We support the efforts of the international community to resolve the problem of landmines, from which more than 70 countries, including my own, are suffering. The world in its entirety has expressed broad concern about this invisible enemy, which not only threatens the lives of thousands of children and women but also causes major economic, social and environmental damage in many countries. A few days ago, and as a follow-up action, the Third Meeting of

the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction was held in Managua. We ask that all international treaties on disarmament, including the Ottawa Convention, be amended, because certain essential provisions are missing, including the legal responsibility of countries that have planted landmines on the territory of other countries and the rights of the damaged countries to compensation.

My country was a battlefield during the Second World War, and millions of mines were laid on our territory. We have suffered the consequences of that war through no fault of our own. Our situation is different from that of other countries that suffer from landmines laid as a result of local and regional conflicts or a foreign occupation. The Ottawa Convention makes no distinction between the legitimate use of landmines for legitimate self-defence against strong aggressor countries and those irresponsibly used by other belligerent States possessing all sorts of weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, we wish to underscore the fact that international efforts to eliminate landmines are faltering, and the countries suffering from them are in need of the necessary resources to modernize their local capacities to dispose of mines and to help rehabilitate and reintegrate victims.

We support efforts to create nuclear-weapon-free zones on the various continents of the world. This is an important step towards achieving nuclear disarmament. We call upon the world to make greater efforts to create new nuclear-weapon-free zones. We also stress the importance of making the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Over a year has passed since the call was made in that regard at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and numerous relevant General Assembly resolutions have been adopted. However, the Tel Aviv regime is not respecting the appeals of the international community and is refusing to abide by the NPT to rid the region of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. That regime is also refusing to place its nuclear weapons under inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency. If international efforts fail to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, then the international community will have failed in its drive for nuclear disarmament.

We also stress the need to commit ourselves to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), a major element in international peace and security. We believe that the unilateral abolition of this Treaty and the argument for developing a national missile defence system by the one super-Power under the pretext that it would protect one country from the missiles of another is a false one. It is simply a pretext to ensure the hegemony and domination of a major Power on earth and in outer space, which would jeopardize peace and strategic balance throughout the world and would lead us back to the cold war and the arms race. This initiative also has a negative impact on national security in our own Arab region vis-à-vis the strategic alliance established between the major Power in question and the Tel Aviv regime and the policy declared by that Power, namely, that it would act to ensure the Tel Aviv regime's qualitative military superiority in the region.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in this room this year, pointed to the need for serious international efforts against trafficking in these lethal weapons. The Conference also shed light on aspects of those weapons that serve to exacerbate regional conflicts and ethnic cleansing and the proliferation and gravity of civil wars. As we can see currently in various parts of the world, there is also a need to emphasize that this trade leads to smuggling, organized crime and trafficking in drugs. Studies show that 90 per cent of the people killed during the last decade died as a result of the proliferation of these arms.

We welcome the United Nations Programme of Action that has been approved to ban trafficking and distribution of these weapons with a view to combating and eliminating this problem. We believe that the Programme is a first step in the right direction. In this regard, we praise the important role played by the President of the Conference. We also wish to pay tribute to the role played by the Ambassador of Mozambique as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. At the same time, we also want to express our disappointment over the fact that the Conference did not succeed in reflecting the international community's determination to solve this problem by virtue of not being able to reach agreement on other issues that were put forward at the Conference. Among those issues was registering and monitoring the

possession of small arms and banning sales of those arms to small groups. We call upon the international community to implement the principal recommendations of the Conference, and we call upon the State that did not approve of those issues to review its position so as to reach international agreement on, at long last, imposing a definitive and comprehensive international ban on the trade in these deadly weapons.

We would like to say once again that small States that do not possess advanced weapons or weapons of mass destruction have the right to possess small arms, as they are the only weapons available to them to equip their forces for legitimate self-defence and to guarantee their domestic security.

We attach great importance to strengthening security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. We support every effort to make the region a bridge for cooperation between Europe, North Africa and the Middle East on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual respect for each country's sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of others. We positively respond to calls for cooperation in confronting and resolving the problems faced by the countries of the region — including terrorism, organized crime and illicit trafficking in small arms, light weapons and drugs.

Ending occupation and recognizing the rights of oppressed peoples, lifting brutal sanctions imposed on some peoples in the region, the withdrawal of military fleets and foreign bases and strengthening cooperation at all levels between States with coastal borders — all these measures have the capacity to transform the region that served as the cradle of civilization into an area of prosperity, peace and security.

In conclusion, I wish to refer to the introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization presented at this session. I wish specifically to refer to the passage in which he stresses the importance of the Organization's role in the area of disarmament and security as being an integral part of the United Nations international responsibility, and to the part in which he draws the attention of the international community to the importance of preventing conflict and fully understanding its causes.

I wish moreover to add that all those who wish to see the establishment of a new international order free from the threat of war and weapons of mass destruction should adopt policies based on a single standard: policies that are more just and equitable with respect to the cause of oppressed peoples aspiring to equality, to dignity and to justice in a new world of the third millennium, a world in which friendship, peace and brotherhood will prevail.

Mr. Estévez-López (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): With this general debate, we formally commence the work of the First Committee at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The Committee is honoured, Sir, to have you as its Chairman. We are certain that your experience and skill will enable our work to attain the success we all desire within the time allotted to us. Allow me, therefore, to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We assure you in advance that you can count on my delegation for all the support we may be called upon to provide.

The current session of the General Assembly has opened in a special framework arising from a series of events, the most telling of which for the work of the First Committee were the Millennium Summit, held at the beginning of the fifty-fifth session, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held last July, and the infamous terrorist attacks that dealt such a heavy blow to our host country just a few weeks ago.

Last year, in our statement in the Committee's general debate, we expressed our belief that we should pause for a moment to reflect on our work and realize that it is not the Committee's interests or the prospects for its continuing existence that will be advanced or impaired by what we achieve or fail to achieve here: it is the interests of all humankind that will be promoted or set back.

We added that, although there may appear to be some exaggeration in putting it this way, there can be no denying that what we are talking about here is putting an end to the manufacture, and working towards the dismantling, of weapons that threaten the safety and the life of all human beings: the representatives who are sitting in this room as well as the billions of our brothers and sisters outside it. Time and again my delegation has stressed how important it is for the resolutions we adopt and the ideals for which we strive to be backed by the political will without which they cannot be translated into reality.

Guatemala realizes that such messages are often considered to be out of place in bodies such as this one,

where solutions to the problems before it are expected to be sought with a sense of realism. And that is where the difficulty lies, for it is thought that realistic action must exclude values. In the name of realism, there have been attempts to drive moral values and the rule of law out of the political scene at both the national and the international levels. Nothing could be more misguided, for neither moral values nor legal norms have ever held back the development of peoples or hindered harmonious coexistence. The grievous events of 11 September were, in part, the result of a divorce between political action on the one hand and morality and law on the other.

With its aftermath of pain and destruction, terrorism is a threat that hovers over all humankind. Its mere existence should make us redouble our efforts to make progress in disarmament and international security. Now, more than ever before, it is imperative to put an end to the manufacture and stockpiling of nuclear, chemical, biological, bacteriological and all other weapons that, far from guaranteeing the right of States to self-defence, only endanger the existence of our peoples.

It is likewise necessary that we review all that pertains to the manufacture, stockpiling, sale and circulation of conventional weapons, small arms and light weapons, anti-personnel mines, ammunition and all explosive devices, to prevent them, to the extent possible, from falling into the hands of individuals or groups eager to use them in the most ruthless fashion, for the sole purpose of sowing destruction and chaos.

Although, to be sure, the results of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects were a step forward towards combating and eliminating the problem, they failed to meet fully the expectations of most of the participants, particularly those of us who here represent nations that have suffered first-hand the destructive effects of small arms and light weapons.

Guatemala considers that now more than ever it is necessary to review all that has been done on armaments of all types and on international security. We must take stock of the accomplishments and failures in the United Nations struggle to promote disarmament, so that on that basis we can take the action required to consolidate measures to secure for world society the human right to live and to develop in peace.

That is why we urge a redoubled effort to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions that are still without them. Because it is in a region that is free of those weapons, Guatemala recognizes the benefits that such zones bring and believes that all peoples are entitled to them. We also appeal to States whose ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is needed for the Treaty to come into force to shoulder their responsibility to the international community.

We further appeal to all countries to pursue the fight against the trade in, and the stockpiling and illegal manufacture of small arms and light weapons, which provide a protective mantle for other unlawful activities, including drug trafficking and terrorism to name but two.

Finally, we urge the United Nations as a whole and the Department for Disarmament Affairs in particular to pursue the process of strengthening the regional centres for which they are responsible. These provide and will continue to provide significant support in achieving the goals towards which we are striving with a view to solving the difficult problems on the First Committee agenda.

Mr. Valdés (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish on behalf of the countries members of the Rio Group to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

The scale of the terrorist acts committed in the United States last month requires that we reflect on ways of strengthening international security. These acts represent concrete threats that affect us all by eroding the very foundations of the social order and the international system.

We wish, therefore, to reiterate what was said in the communiqué of the countries members of the Rio Group about the acts committed on 11 September. In that communiqué, we expressed our solidarity with the Government and the people of the United States, and we underscored the need to ensure that such acts of international terrorism do not go unpunished and that the applicable norms of international and criminal law are enforced.

The countries members of the Rio Group agree with the view expressed by the Secretary-General concerning the need to undertake additional efforts to

prevent terrorist acts using weapons of mass destruction. We are convinced that the measures suggested by the Secretary-General in the plenary of the General Assembly should be given due consideration by Member States.

In this regard, we support the holding of a debate on the actions needed to achieve universality for treaties related to weapons of mass destruction, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the promotion of cooperation between international organizations concerned with such weapons; the prohibition of the sale of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors; progress towards the eradication of anti-personnel mines; improvement of the physical protection of nuclear and chemical installations; and the elaboration of strategies to deal with terrorist threats using electronic means that have implications for international peace and security.

Through the Santiago Declaration of August this year, the heads of State and Government of the countries members of the Rio Group stated their position on a series of issues that we consider to be of fundamental importance in the field of disarmament and international security. These and other relevant issues are the ones that we wish to raise here today in this forum.

We wish to reiterate how important it is for the entire international community to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In the light of the forthcoming Second Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we wish to invite all those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so as soon as possible.

The countries members of the Rio Group note with concern that no progress has been made towards the full implementation of the 13 measures to achieve nuclear disarmament contained in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We appeal to all States, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to honour the commitments undertaken in article VI of the Treaty and in the Final Document of the Conference.

In this connection also, we wish to underscore the importance of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and of its organization — the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) — which has been entrusted with the task of ensuring the fulfilment of the objective of consolidating the first nuclear-weapon-free inhabited region of the planet.

We consider that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones is one of the most significant advances in the field of disarmament in the last few decades. In our view, the consolidation and expansion of such zones contributes in a decisive manner to the building of a more stable and secure world. As representatives of the first region of the world to have prohibited nuclear weapons, we support the initiative to promote the gradual development of a nuclear-weapon-free zone that would include the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas to the north of the Equator, where applicable in conformity with specific treaties. We therefore appeal to the international community to reaffirm its support for efforts aimed at the creation of such a zone.

In this regard, we also encourage the five States of Central Asia in their initiative to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region.

In the context of the peaceful use of nuclear energy and its relationship to international security, we wish to stress the importance that should be attached to the security aspects of the international maritime transport of radioactive wastes.

We note that at the beginning of the year it was reported that this type of waste was once again being transported along the coasts and navigable waterways of countries members of the Rio Group. We therefore reiterate our concern at the risks that these activities pose to the health of the coastal populations and to the ecosystems of the marine and Antarctic environment. Special attention should also be paid to the situation of island developing countries, because of their particular vulnerability in the event of disasters or accidents.

All of these concerns have been expressed in the communiqué of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Rio Group in March of this year, which was circulated as document A/56/360 under the item "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes".

Consequently, while we welcome the progress made over the past few years in specialized forums on these issues, in particular resolution GC(45)/28, adopted recently by the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, we urge the international community to continue to work towards

supplementing and refining the international legal order on security that is applicable in such cases.

In the efforts being made by the international community to control and eliminate the danger of weapons of mass destruction, the Chemical Weapons Convention represents a model instrument on account of its non-discriminatory nature, the balance that it establishes between disarmament and non-proliferation, and the system that it introduces for international cooperation in this field for peaceful purposes.

Because of these characteristics, this Convention has an undoubtedly universal nature. We note also that sustained progress has been made in its implementation, and we are confident that the recent agreement signed between the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations will contribute not only to strengthening efforts to ensure the universality of the Convention, but also to the ultimate objective, which is the total elimination of these weapons of mass destruction from the face of the earth.

On the other hand, the countries members of the Rio Group regret the lack of progress towards the conclusion of a protocol for the verification of the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons. We hope that at the next review conference of the Convention, the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group will be renewed, so that negotiations can continue with a view to finalizing the elaboration of that international juridical instrument.

We wish to reaffirm the need to strengthen confidence-building measures and measures to enhance cooperation in the area of defence, as well as the importance of undertaking defence expenditures with maximum transparency and with the full knowledge of the public. This includes the coordination of the broad participation of our countries in the system of information on the acquisition of conventional weapons of the United Nations and of the Organization of American States, as well as periodic information on military expenditures, in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations and the quest for formulas to standardize their accounting systems.

In this connection, we take note with interest of the study undertaken by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on behalf of Argentina and Chile, on the establishment of a standardized common methodology to measure defence expenditures, as well as of the initiative adopted recently by Chile and Peru in this respect.

We are firmly convinced of the need to adopt measures that will contribute to the effective and gradual limitation and control of defence expenditures in the region, so that more resources will become available for the economic and social development of our peoples.

We wish to take this opportunity to highlight the important work being done by Argentina as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission's Working Group on Confidence-Building Measures. We hope that the Working Group can bring its work to a successful conclusion at its substantive session of 2002.

We share the view that it is urgently necessary to achieve the universalization of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We support the results of the Third Review Conference of the States parties, which was held in Managua, Nicaragua, last September, and which are contained in the corresponding Declaration. We wish to take this opportunity to highlight the commitment that we have undertaken to convert our region into a zone free of this type of weapon.

We further wish to express our firm intention to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at the national, subregional, regional and global levels and to take measures to promote international cooperation and assistance.

We therefore support the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference held in July, which complements the progress achieved in our region in that field. The countries members of the Rio Group are determined to ensure follow-up to the Conference. To that end, we have organized a seminar, to be held in Santiago, Chile, in November. We also wish to take this opportunity to note the successful work done by Colombia in the chairmanship of the Conference.

The countries members of the Rio Group wish to express their firm support for and appreciation of the activities being undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, based in Lima, Peru, for its assistance to regional

disarmament initiatives, for encouraging debates on security and for its contribution to the coordination of United Nations efforts to promote peace and security in the region.

Mr. Goussous (Jordan): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to guide the work of the First Committee. I also wish to express our appreciation to Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar for the excellent way in which he conducted the work of the First Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I would like to assure you that you will have my delegation's full support in ensuring an outcome that will meet our expectations.

On behalf of the delegation of Jordan, I wish to convey our deepest sympathy and condolences to the Government and people of the United States of America, to the people of New York and Washington, D.C., and to the families of the bereaved who suffered great emotional, physical and moral losses as a result of the acts of barbarism perpetrated against the World Trade Center buildings on the 11 September.

The First Committee meets this year against the backdrop of remarkable achievements as well as serious challenges in the field of international security and disarmament. On the remarkable achievements side of the balance sheet, we are approaching universal access on four legal instruments: first, the ratification by 83 States parties of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; secondly, the forthcoming Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty after the deposition of instruments of ratification by 79 States, which represents an increase of 50 per cent over the number of ratifications at the time of the Conference held in 1999; thirdly, the continued work of the Ad Hoc Group of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, aimed at establishing a verification and compliance regime for the Convention; and, fourthly, the adoption of and adherence by many States to a Model Protocol Additional to the existing Safeguards Agreements between member States and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

On the other side of the balance sheet, we regrettably find such negative developments and situations as the ongoing reluctance by the only State in the Middle East with considerable nuclear-weapon capabilities, Israel, to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to place all its nuclear installations and facilities under full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency; the continued reluctance of the nuclear-weapon States to meet their obligations in compliance with article VI of the NPT by pursuing negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament; the failure to reach agreement on the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament; and the failure so far to take practical steps towards broadening the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to encompass military holdings and procurement through national production, as well as stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons.

Jordan has always been committed to the cause of international peace and security. We have over the years advocated a peaceful settlement to the conflict in the Middle East that could lead to just, comprehensive and durable peace in the region. We have come to realize, as have many others within and outside the region, that for durable peace to be achieved, positive steps towards confidence-building between the parties would have to be taken, in addition to such steps as freeing the region of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Jordan has adhered to the Chemical Weapons Convention, ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, ratified the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines and signed with the IAEA an Additional Protocol for safeguards. In so doing, Jordan has completed its adherence to all international instruments providing for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and for the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons. It is noteworthy in this context that the General Assembly has, over the last two decades, called upon all States in the Middle East that have not yet done so, particularly the only State in the region with nuclear-weapon capabilities, to adhere without delay to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty and to place all its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards of the IAEA. All the States in the Middle East, except Israel, are now parties to the NPT.

Since 1974, the General Assembly has called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and the resolution on that subject has

gained further momentum since 1980 by being adopted by consensus. Furthermore, in the resolution on the Middle East, adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the States parties called upon all States in the region to

> "take practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress towards, inter alia, the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems, and to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of this objective". (*NPT/CONF.2000/7, annex, para. 5*)

Paragraph 6 of the same resolution calls upon all States party to the NPT, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the achievement of that goal. Unfortunately, more than six years after the historic 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and almost two years after the 2000 NPT Review Conference, no indication of such efforts has so far been felt in the region.

We cannot but reiterate our conviction, as we have time and again, that the outlook for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East is too gloomy without confidence-building between the parties involved. Confidence, however, can never be attainable with the existence of nuclear weapons in the region and without the abolition of the theory of nuclear deterrence.

As far as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is concerned, we are encouraged by the fact that 150 States have signed the treaty so far, 79 States have ratified it and 21 have deposited instruments of ratification. We join other member States that have called on all countries which have not yet done so, particularly those 44 States whose ratification is needed for the Treaty to come into force, to sign and ratify the Treaty.

We are also encouraged by negotiations aimed at the conclusion of a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Jordan has on many occasions reiterated the importance of a fissile material cut-off treaty as a significant step towards the achievement of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. On the other hand, we regret that the Conference on Disarmament has failed to agree on its programme of work for the last five years and to start constructive negotiations on the treaty, among other things.

Last July, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects achieved important progress. The Conference attracted widespread attention, with the world's media reporting extensively on the cost of and carnage caused by these weapons.

Civil society groups from across the globe were deeply and creatively involved. After tense and difficult negotiations, Member States forged a consensus among diverse views and interests and adopted a comprehensive Programme of Action; we call for it to be fully implemented as soon as possible.

Faced with the global scourge of small arms, the international community has now begun an important process of constructive global action. States have committed themselves to developing, strengthening and implementing norms and measures aimed at preventing, fighting and, ultimately, eradicating the illicit manufacture of and trade in small arms and light weapons. They agreed to place special emphasis on post-conflict situations and, in particular, to provide greater support to programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, including child ex-combatants. They also agreed to act responsibly in the areas of export, import, transit and re-transfer of weapons, since legal weapons all too often and all too easily find their way into the hands of terrorists, criminals and drug traffickers.

States recognized the need for marking and for keeping accurate records that will enable timely tracing and identification. States agreed to destroy illicit or surplus weapons as necessary. The Programme of Action calls for greater cooperation and for education and public awareness programmes.

These are significant first steps in alleviating a grave threat to international peace and security. We must now consolidate these gains. A programme of action is a beginning, not an end in itself. Implementation will be the true test.

Jordan has been a staunch supporter of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We regard the Register as an indispensable mechanism for achieving transparency in armaments, which leads to confidence-

building, especially in conflict-prone regions such as the Middle East. However, we believe that the Register may not be effective unless its scope is enlarged to include military holdings and procurement through national production, as well as weapons of mass destruction, in particular, nuclear weapons. We therefore regret that the Panel of Governmental Experts failed to deal with this problem.

As I outlined earlier, Jordan has ratified the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines. This step has reaffirmed our commitment to help eliminate this most excessively injurious and inhumane weapon, which has indiscriminate effects, especially on children and other innocent civilians. Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan, in her capacity as patron of the Landmine Survivors Network, is leading and contributing to the worldwide campaign to rid the world of anti-personnel landmines.

Finally, I would like to conclude my remarks by quoting the late President Dwight Eisenhower, who said,

> "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children."

Mr. Lint (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Norway, align themselves with this statement.

Allow me to congratulate you most sincerely, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. The European Union wishes to assure you of its wholehearted support in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

I would like to begin by referring to the events of 11 September, which have left us deeply shocked. The European Union condemns all forms of terrorism. It expresses its solidarity with the American people and the Government of the United States of America. It considers that disarmament and non-proliferation on a multilateral and general basis are more necessary than ever today in order to prevent terrorists and their organizations from having any access to more powerful means of conducting their abhorrent activities.

The European Union will continue to give its wholehearted support to international efforts in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, regarding both weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is a major problem and is a matter of concern. The European Union calls for a continuing commitment on the part of the international community in the fight against such proliferation and in the efforts to achieve disarmament. The Göteborg meeting of the European Council in June 2001 emphasized that the strengthening of international norms and political instruments for preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is of prime importance to the Union, which is committed to strengthening multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

For the European Union, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. In this spirit, we support and encourage the implementation of the objectives laid down in the Treaty and the decisions of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the results achieved by the 2000 Review Conference, as expressed in the Final Document adopted by consensus at the latter Conference. The countries of the European Union are determined to take part in their full implementation.

It is necessary to step up efforts to continue implementing the results of the NPT Review Conference held in 2000. In this context, the Union welcomes indications from the United States and the Russian Federation that they are actively working to bring about a considerable reduction in their nuclear arsenals. It is of the utmost importance that these reductions be verifiable and irreversible. The Union calls on all States to make a success of the upcoming session of the Committee, in 2002, the first such session since the Review Conference.

The European Union believes that universal accession is necessary in order to consolidate the objective of ensuring non-proliferation and disarmament worldwide. Consequently, the European Union calls on the four States that have not yet done so to accede to the NPT.

In this year when we are celebrating the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by the General Assembly, on 10 September 1996, the Union wishes to reiterate that it has spared no effort in promoting the early entry into force of the Treaty and universal accession to it. It has made over 70 representations and has also argued in support of the Treaty in all the appropriate international forums. It is firmly committed to persevering in this effort. It is with this in mind that the Union reiterates its full support for the efforts to establish the verification regime rapidly and in accordance with the Treaty. To ensure that the resolve of the international community does not weaken, it calls on all the States that have not yet done so to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay and unconditionally, particularly the 13 States on the list of 44 States whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force. We welcome the ratification, since the last session of the General Assembly, by Benin, Croatia, Guyana, the Holy See, Malta, Namibia, the Philippines, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Ukraine and Uruguay.

In line with the commitments that they assumed by signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the European Union member States remain committed to the full implementation of the verification regime and the early entry into force of the Treaty. In this respect, the European Union wishes to recall the statement made by the United States at the fifteenth session of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Preparatory Commission on 21 August. While noting with satisfaction the intention of the United States to maintain its moratorium on nuclear tests, we can only regret its announcement that it will no longer take part in certain activities arising from the Treaty and that it is not intending to review its position regarding ratification. That is a matter of concern for us, especially since the United States has, to date, played an important role in nuclear arms control, particularly in the framework of the CTBT.

The negotiation at the Conference on Disarmament of a non-discriminatory and universal treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosives (FMCT) constitutes an essential stage in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The European Union regrets that a consensus has not yet been reached in the Conference on Disarmament that would permit the start of negotiations on the issue in accordance with the mandate approved in 1995. We reiterate our call to the members of the Conference on Disarmament to make every effort to attain that objective as soon as possible. The appointment of three Special Coordinators to review the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, to consider the expansion of its membership and to study the improvement of the efficiency of its functioning may contribute to improving the atmosphere within the Conference. Although limited in scope, this procedural decision might constitute the first step in a gradual process of working towards the adoption of a work programme.

The European Union calls for the continuation of the work of the Special Coordinators and supports their reappointment next year. It will, of course, be necessary to take into account the security concerns of all Member States, if we are to overcome the obstacles to the effective launch of work within the Conference. In this respect, the Union would like to reaffirm its view that the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Conference on Disarmament should begin without delay, on the basis of mandates that are pragmatic and broad enough for agreement to be reached and that cover the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Furthermore, the Union would like to reaffirm its attachment to following up the process of expanding the Disarmament Conference, which is the only multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament and arms control, in particular as it relates to those members of the European Union that are not yet members of the Conference, as well as the associated countries which have submitted their request for admission to the Conference.

We repeat our appeal to the countries of South Asia to make every effort to prevent an arms race in the region. We call on both India and Pakistan to cooperate in the international community's efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We repeat our call for them to implement the specific measures set out in Security Council resolution 1172

(1998), in particular the provisions relating to the signing and ratification of the CTBT.

The European Union remains concerned about the lack of significant progress in the implementation of the safeguards agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and urges it to comply fully with that agreement and to cooperate fully with the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as soon as possible, particularly with regard to the verification of its initial declaration. The European Union calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to implement without delay the specific programme established by the Agency, which proposes a set of preliminary stages in preparation for verification of the accuracy and exhaustiveness of the initial declaration of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The European Union recalls its financial and technical contribution to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization's activities in the Korean Peninsula. The Union repeats its appeal to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to accede unconditionally to the CTBT without delay. The Union also attaches great importance to the continuation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its moratorium on missiles, and expresses its concern with regard to that country's exports of missiles and missile technology.

The European Union would like to reaffirm its attachment to the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and to its full implementation. We continue to support efforts to establish an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The Union repeats its request to the only State in the region not to have acceded to the NPT to sign and ratify it. The European Union also believes that the accession of all States in the region to the conventions banning chemical and biological weapons would make an essential and very significant contribution to peace and to regional and global security. Furthermore, we call on all States in the region which have not yet done so to conclude a full-scope safeguards agreement with the IAEA.

As reaffirmed in the Principles and Objectives of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and restated in the final document of the NPT Review Conference of May 2000, the Union believes that the creation of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, based on arrangements freely concluded between the States of the region, strengthens regional and global peace and security. We look forward to the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty in Africa.

The European Union attaches particular importance to the matter of compliance with the NPT. The situation in Iraq is also a matter of major concern for us. More than two years have elapsed since the IAEA Action Team's departure from that country, and inspections have still not resumed. We again call on Iraq to comply fully with all relevant Security Council resolutions, to give the IAEA and the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission the access necessary to enable them to execute their mandate and to cooperate fully with them so that they can update their information and gain a technically coherent picture of Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme, as they were able to do until 1998.

The Union notes with concern that the prolonged interruption of the inspections complicates the Agency's efforts to gain as accurate a knowledge of Iraq's nuclear programme as it had achieved in 1998, and increases the time that it will take to regain that level of knowledge. The Union notes that a routine inspection made it possible this year once again to carry out effective verification of the physical inventory of nuclear material in accordance with the safeguards agreement signed by Iraq under the NPT. This verification cannot, however, be a substitute for the activities which the Agency needs to conduct in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The effectiveness of this strengthened system of safeguards is, of course, closely linked to the objective of universality to which the European Union attaches the greatest importance. That is why I would like to congratulate all those States that have signed or ratified additional protocols since the most recent meeting of the IAEA General Conference. On 22 September 1998, each State member of the European Union signed an additional protocol. Since then, most member States have already ratified them, and the others are currently completing the ratification process. The European Union repeats its call to those States parties to the NPT which have not yet signed a full-scope safeguards agreement to fulfil that obligation, which is incumbent on them under article III of the Treaty.

The European Union calls on all States that have signed safeguards agreements with the IAEA to conclude and implement as soon as possible the additional protocols to those agreements and to implement full-scope safeguards agreements, according them the necessary priority. The Union also appeals to all States non-party to the NPT to place all their nuclear activities under the supervision of the Agency.

Strengthening international norms and political instruments to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is of primary importance to the Union. We have decided to step up our efforts in the fight against the proliferation of ballistic missiles. This is reflected in the conclusions of our General Affairs Council of 14 May 2001, the Declaration by the European Council in Götebo.g on 15 and 16 June 2001 and the European Union Common Position adopted on 23 July 2001 in Brussels.

The European Union supports the universalization of the draft international code of conduct drawn up by the members of the Missile Technology Control Regime. An open and transparent ad hoc international negotiating process accessible to all has just been launched. A first meeting for negotiations will be organized in France at the beginning of 2002. All States wishing to participate in the finalization of the international code of conduct will be able to do so on an equal footing and on a consensual basis. The code should be ready for adoption at the end of 2002. We encourage all States concerned to take an active part in this process.

The draft international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation is the most concrete and most ambitious initiative in this field, and as such offers the best chance of achieving results in the short term. This code will be a politically binding document. The European Union considers that after its adoption the code could be of interest to the United Nations and have a positive influence on other initiatives to address the proliferation of ballistic missiles, such as, for example, the proposed Global Control System.

I wish to emphasize that the Union welcomes the creation of a United Nations group of missile experts, pursuant to resolution 55/33 A, as a potentially useful mechanism for multilateral discussion of the missile question.

The European Union considers the Chemical Weapons Convention the result of the international community's determination to rid itself once and for all of one of the most abhorrent categories of weapons. This Convention is a unique disarmament and non-proliferation instrument. It is therefore imperative that its integrity and strict application be fully guaranteed.

Today, 143 States are party to the Convention. A considerable number of States, however, have yet to sign. We must work to ensure that they accede to this instrument in order to strengthen the total ban on chemical weapons and to make an effective contribution to international and regional peace and security, particularly in areas of tension. The European Union has for its part made representations to promote universal adherence to the Convention.

The European Union emphasizes the importance of the destruction obligations laid down in the Convention. In this connection, it takes the opportunity to make explicit reference to some of the Convention's articles, notably article I — which in paragraph 2 stipulates that "Each State Party undertakes to destroy chemical weapons it owns or possesses". Article IV, paragraph 6, stipulates that "Each State Party shall destroy all chemical weapons specified in paragraph 1" and that

> "destruction shall begin not later than two years after this Convention enters into force for [the State Party] and shall finish not later than 10 years after entry into force of this Convention".

These are key articles. Each State concerned is therefore under an obligation to submit detailed plans for the destruction of chemical weapons. The European Union thanks the Russian Federation for presenting its revised plan for the destruction of chemical weapons at the last meeting of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council. The Union expresses the hope that this plan will now be effectively implemented at the earliest opportunity.

In this connection, the Union also emphasizes the importance of article V of the Convention, obliging all States parties to destroy all chemical weapons production facilities on their territory not later than 10 years after the Convention's entry into force. The Union welcomes the progress made in this crucial area of the Convention and urges all States parties concerned to do everything in their power to ensure compliance with the prescribed deadlines.

The European Union gives priority to the reinforcement of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. The member States of the European Union have taken an active part in the negotiations of the Ad Hoc Group on a legally binding protocol establishing a verification and compliance regime. According to the statement by the Foreign Ministers of the European Union of 11 June 2001, a protocol including the essential principles set out in the European Union's Common Position of 17 May 1999 would strike the right balance between the Convention's compliance requirements and the national security interests and economic interests of States parties. Such a protocol would thus effectively strengthen the Convention and increase confidence in its strict application. We regret that the Ad Hoc Group was unable to finalize the work on a protocol strengthening the Convention, or even to adopt a procedural report. In the light of this failure, the Union reiterates that it attaches fundamental importance to the preservation and reinforcement of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regimes and to compliance with the Ad Hoc Group's mandate. Convinced that the biological weapons threat calls for an appropriate multilateral response, the European Union expresses its determination to retain and build on the experience it has acquired over many years of negotiations, including the composite text. It points to the importance it attaches to the process of strengthening the Convention, for which the next focal date will be the November Conference in Geneva.

On the question of the fight against the proliferation of, and the implementation of the international ban on, certain categories of weapons, the Union emphasizes the importance of effective export control measures. It is essential that all exporting States assume their responsibilities and take measures to ensure that exports of sensitive materials, equipment and technologies are subject to appropriate surveillance and control measures. The attacks in the United States have made us realize that these controls are more important today than ever. They are an essential element in the fight against terrorism, which could use weapons of mass destruction. An effective export control regime guarantees the peaceful use of goods, technologies and materials and can thus facilitate cooperation in areas serving technological development.

The European Union supports the efforts of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime to provide transparency. These efforts promote dialogue and cooperation in an area in which decisions are otherwise based on national sovereignty.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001, provided an opportunity to consider effective ways of combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons. The Conference discussed both prevention and reduction aspects, including measures in the framework of post-conflict situations and supply-and-demand aspects. It also looked at the social and economic implications of this scourge and its development-related aspects.

In the context of the Joint Action of 17 December 1998 on the European Union's contribution to combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons, the Union played an active role in the preparation of the Conference and in the negotiations on the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The European Union has also endeavoured to reach a consensus in the preparation of OSCE documents on small arms and light weapons.

The Union welcomes the adoption by the Conference of an action plan that includes measures to be taken at national, regional and global levels to combat illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, with particular reference to export controls, traceability of weapons, stockpile and surplus management, the triple aspect of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and cooperation and assistance. Although the Union had hoped that the Conference would succeed in going further on certain points of the action plan, it particularly welcomes the follow-up process that has been put in place, which demonstrates that the Conference is the starting point of a process in which it will play an active part.

In June 2001, the European Union published the first annual report on the implementation of both the Joint Action, on its contribution to combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons, and the European Union Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Conventional Arms, of June 1997. This

report was published as a document of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Responsibility in arms transfer policies is essential in resolving the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Code of Conduct for Arms Exports, adopted by the Council of the European Union on 8 June 1998, establishes criteria for conventional arms transfers and provides for consultation procedures to promote convergence of national arms export policies of member States.

The Union published its second annual report on the Code's application on 3 January 2001. The report notes that the second year of implementation of the Code of Conduct was marked by further progress, in particular by a considerable increase in the number of denials of arms exports notified by member States, which is evidence of member States' resolve to act in greater concert in this area. The report also emphasizes that member States have agreed to further clarify notified denials and that the Council of the European Union has been able to finalize a Common List of Military Equipment covered by the Code. This is an evolving list.

The report also indicates priority guidelines for the near future, singling out the following issues in particular: finalization of a common list of non-military security and police equipment, development of exchanges of information on national control policies for the export of arms to certain countries or regions regarded as requiring special vigilance, harmonization of national annual reports on the application of the Code, coordination of the member States' positions in multilateral bodies and promotion of the principles of the Code in third countries.

The Union underlines the importance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, not only as a global confidence-building measure to support stability and security, but also as a measure encouraging regional efforts aimed at greater transparency. However, it is the extent of the participation in this instrument that enhances its significance. The Union calls on all States to submit timely declarations of their imports and exports to the Register, including — to further increase transparency and strengthen the value of the Register — information on military holdings and procurement through national production. The inclusion of such data will render the Register more complete and useful. The Union reiterates its support for strengthening the Register, for extending its scope as quickly as possible, and for its universalization.

The Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines currently has 21 signatories and 121 parties. It is clear that an international standard has been created that cannot now be ignored. However, we must do even better and reach the entire international community. The success of the Ottawa Convention should not just be measured by the number of States that have acceded to it. Since it entered into force, trade in anti-personnel mines has virtually ceased and the production of such mines has considerably decreased. Similarly, the number of victims in the countries most affected is constantly falling, and worldwide more financial aid is being granted every year for mine clearance, assistance to victims and mine awareness programmes.

It is also essential to implement the Convention and to rid the world of this weapon. The Union deplores any act contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Convention and is deeply concerned by the allegations in the last Landmine Monitor Report that certain States parties and non-State actors are continuing to use anti-personnel mines.

We have no time to lose. The Convention lays down strict time limits for the destruction of stocks and the clearance of mined areas. Let us marshal all our efforts to achieve the objectives of the Convention by the deadlines set. The countries that are the victims must not be left to carry out this struggle alone. The international community as a whole must help realize the Convention's aims.

The Union thanks the Government of Nicaragua for organizing the Third Meeting of States Parties and welcomes the conclusions reached at that Meeting, in particular the adoption of a guide on transparency measures in implementation of article 7 of the Convention. This instrument will allow us to draw up better national reports on the implementation of the Ottawa Convention. The Meeting also approved the information dossier produced by the International Committee of the Red Cross to promote implementation of article 9 of the Convention.

The member States of the Union reaffirm the importance they attach to the Convention by playing an active role in its intersessional work as co-chairs and

co-rapporteurs. The Union welcomes the decision to strengthen the intersessional process by setting up a support service for the implementation of the Convention.

The Union also expresses its gratitude to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, to other non-governmental organizations concerned and to the regional and international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, for their substantial and important contribution to the intersessional work and, overall, to the implementation and the consolidation of the Convention. The Union would also like to thank all the agencies involved in mine clearance, mine awareness, assistance to victims, the destruction of stocks and other efforts towards our common goal.

The Union has responded generously to the challenge of anti-personnel mines. In recent years, it has done so particularly through its policies for development aid, rehabilitation and reconstruction, humanitarian aid and research, while setting up policies specifically designed to meet this problem. It continues to offer aid to initiatives and research to alleviate the suffering of the victims of these mines. In the year 2000, a total of 125 million euros was earmarked by the European Community and the Member States for implementation of the Convention, making the Union the world's major donor in this area. The Union would stress that this sum constitutes a 10 per cent increase over its contributions in 1999. The Union has recently adopted two regulations aimed at strengthening our efforts to eliminate landmines.

We are convinced that it is essential to continue to strengthen the coordination of international assistance in our efforts to eliminate anti-personnel mines so as to achieve a better allocation of resources. In that context, we wish to stress the importance of the review of the United Nations mine action strategy for the period 2001-2005, to which the Union makes both a formal and a substantive contribution. For its part, the European Commission has sent the European Parliament and the European Council a communication detailing a policy that will place the European Union in the vanguard of the struggle to abolish anti-personnel mines.

The Union attaches great importance to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). To date, four Protocols have supplemented this Convention in addition to Protocol II, as amended on 3 May 1996. They are all of fundamental humanitarian interest. The Convention and its Protocols constitute an essential instrument for the international community for controlling conventional weapons that are deemed to be particularly inhumane.

The Union therefore welcomes the fact that many States have acceded to the Convention and its Protocols. It appeals to all States that have not yet done so to take all the necessary steps to become parties to the regime as soon as possible, and thus give both civilians and combatants the protection they deserve.

The European Union hopes that the follow-up conference to be held in Geneva from 11 to 21 December will be crowned with success and allow for an exchange of ideas on implementation of the Convention and for entering into new commitments in order to strengthen the humanitarian standards that we share.

On the substance, diverse proposals and ideas have already been formulated that will have to be examined at the conference. The Union supports the idea of giving a mandate for negotiating a Protocol on the explosive remnants of war. This negotiation could start after the follow-up conference. The Union is particularly concerned about the serious problems caused by the explosive remnants of war and the humanitarian and social repercussions of the presence of unexploded ordnance. We cannot turn a blind eye to the human and social cost of these explosive remnants of war.

Furthermore, Protocol II, as amended, gives us a precedent that could be extended to the entire Convention — namely, the applicability of these international standards to non-international armed conflicts. The amended Protocol II was a significant stage in the strengthening of the CCW regime, particularly since the parties have come to agree on extending the application of these international standards to non-international armed conflicts. Since most conflicts today are internal, the Union hopes that the review conference in December will be able to decide to extend the scope of the entire CCW regime to non-international conflicts.

The Union also attaches great importance to the possibility of incorporating in the Convention a simple, effective mechanism for strengthening its enforcement.

The Union hopes to be able to strengthen the regime applicable to landmines, other than anti-personnel mines. The Union welcomes the proposals on the detectability of these mines and on the possibility of equipping remotely laid mines, other than anti-personnel mines, with self-destruct or self-neutralizing mechanisms, together with back-up self-deactivation devices.

The European Union is prepared to discuss other ways of strengthening humanitarian law in connection with this Convention.

The common European security and defence policy (ESDP) aims to give the Union the means to play its role fully on the international stage and to assume its responsibilities in crisis situations. The Union is determined to establish an autonomous capacity that will allow it to take decisions and, where the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a whole is not engaged, to launch and then to conduct military operations under the leadership of the European Union in response to international crises. The development of the ESDP will increase the Union's ability to contribute to international peace and security, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The development of European crisis-management capabilities is an additional asset for responding to emerging or existing conflicts. As the ESDP develops, Europeans will, inter alia, be able to respond more effectively and more coherently to requests from leading organizations such as the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Detailed procedures for cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations, as well as between the European Union and the OSCE, have been established, and certain topics have been selected for cooperation with the United Nations.

The scope of the ESDP is defined in the Treaty on European Union. The Union's objective is to have the capability to carry out the full range of "Petersberg" tasks: humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking. This does not involve the creation of a European army. The commitment of national resources by member States to such operations will be based on their sovereign decisions.

At Nice it was decided that the Union should quickly be made operational and that a decision to that end would be taken by the European Council, no later than at its meeting in Laeken at the end of the current presidency. To achieve this objective, the Union has set up permanent structures; it is developing and testing crisis-management procedures; and it is continuing the work already in progress on capabilities. It is also pursuing negotiations with NATO to reach early agreement on arrangements whereby the European Union can have access to NATO capabilities and resources. The member States have set themselves the global objective of being able, by 2003, to deploy within 60 days and sustain for at least one year forces of up to 60,000 persons. The conference on capability improvement to be held in November will be an important step towards the achievement of this goal.

The ESDP amounts to more than just the military aspects of crisis management. The added value of the Union — its particular characteristic — is its capacity to mobilize a vast range of both civilian and military means and instruments, thus giving it a global crisis management capability. The development of means in the civilian sphere is also an important part of the European Union's efforts. Four priority areas have been identified: a police force; strengthening the rule of law; strengthening civil administration; and civil protection. Work on the police is progressing well. A ministerial pledging conference on police is to be held under the Belgian presidency. Specific goals were also defined at Göteborg for the other areas identified.

Finally, the Union is not just intent on managing crises. It is also determined to develop conflict-prevention, to alleviate the causes of potential conflicts. The programme that it adopted in Göteborg for the prevention of violent conflicts demonstrates its determination to act in this area, using in a consistent manner the various instruments at its disposal, including arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

During 2000 the Union declared its readiness to take a major part in all efforts aimed at improving the capabilities, coherence and effectiveness of the OSCE. These should encompass recognition of the legal personality of the OSCE, as well as a homogeneous regime of privileges and immunities.

The Union has stressed the need for closer and more operational cooperation with the OSCE in civilian crisis management and conflict prevention, in conformity with the Istanbul Charter and its Platform for Cooperative Security, as well as decisions by the European Council in meetings in Helsinki, Feira and Nice.

The European Union urges nations not to relax their efforts to achieve the fundamental objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation. Multilateral work must continue and even be stepped up. The Union hopes that the current session of the First Committee will contribute to this, in keeping with the Organization's mission: the consolidation of peace and security through international cooperation.

The Chairman: I remind members that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions has been set at 6 p.m. on Thursday, 18 October. I urge members to submit their drafts as early as possible — especially the "traditional" draft resolutions and those that might have financial implications.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.4

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-sixth session

First Committee

4th meeting

Tuesday, 9 October 2001, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): I have the honour and privilege to take the floor on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own delegation, Myanmar.

Allow me, first of all, to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. My congratulations also go to the members of the Bureau. We ASEAN representatives are fully confident that, under your able leadership, our deliberations will bear fruitful results. At the same time, I should like to assure you of our full cooperation and support. I also wish to express our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for his comprehensive and important statement.

ASEAN countries would like to express our condolences and sympathies to the families of the victims of the senseless terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001. The recent tragic events of 11 September are a wake-up call for all of us regarding the danger posed by terrorism, including nuclear terrorism. We welcome the prompt actions taken by the United Nations, and take note of the resolutions adopted recently by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations in this regard. We note with concern the close connection between international terrorism, illegal trafficking in arms and illegal movement of nuclear, chemical, biological and other deadly materials. We hope that we will bear in mind the dangers of international terrorism in the deliberations of the First Committee.

Last year, we ASEAN countries welcomed the successful outcome of the United Nations Millennium Summit, which was held in New York. The Millennium Declaration, adopted by the Summit, is of utmost importance and reflects the commitments by our heads of State and Government. During this session we should focus our efforts on making those commitments a reality.

ASEAN countries would like to reiterate that we view the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons as a very important contribution to the international community's efforts towards peace and security.

ASEAN countries recognize that, in view of recent political developments, there now exist conditions for the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons. ASEAN countries also reaffirm the unanimous conclusion of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996, that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear

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01-57041 (E)

disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In that regard, we the ASEAN countries have co-sponsored the resolution introduced by Malaysia in support of that important ruling, and we will continue to do so.

For a number of years, ASEAN countries have co-sponsored the resolution initiated by Myanmar urging the nuclear-weapon States to stop immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. The resolution urges the nuclear-weapon States, as an interim measure, to de-alert and deactivate immediately their nuclear weapons and to take other concrete measures to further reduce the operational status of their nuclear-weapon systems. It also calls for the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, at an early date, to identify and deal with concrete measures of nuclear disarmament.

Those two resolutions are part of ASEAN members' contributions to the cause of disarmament. This year, Malaysia and Myanmar, with the support of ASEAN and other co-sponsors, will once again introduce those resolutions. It is our hope that the resolutions will enjoy broader support and increased co-sponsorship.

At the same time, I would like to inform delegations that ASEAN countries also successfully introduced a working paper on nuclear disarmament at the 2001 session of the Disarmament Commission. The proposals contained in the ASEAN working paper, which underscore the elements of the resolutions I have just mentioned, were clearly reflected in the paper prepared by the Chairman of the Working Group on nuclear disarmament. Through such efforts, ASEAN countries will work hard to enhance the momentum on the process of nuclear disarmament.

The ASEAN countries have consistently stressed the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We reiterate our call on the nuclear-weapon States to make further efforts towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

In that context, we look forward to the convening of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which is to take place in New York, and we call on all States signatories to support the objectives of the Conference. We are encouraged that three nuclear-weapon States have ratified that important treaty. We also urge all States, particularly the remaining nuclear-weapon States, to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

Last year we were able to bring about a positive outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The ASEAN countries particularly welcome the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI of the Treaty. We reiterate our view that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We therefore call again for the full and effective implementation of the steps set out in the Final Document of the Review Conference. In that connection, we reaffirm our conviction that there exists an urgent need for the nuclear-weapon States to take concrete measures to fulfil their obligations under the NPT, in particular its article VI on nuclear disarmament and its article IV on providing technical assistance to non-nuclear-weapon States in the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

ASEAN countries note the recent dialogue among the major Powers and other concerned States on the issue of national missile defence; we have expressed our hope that such dialogue will narrow the differences and bring about new constructive approaches to address the issues related to that issue in the interest of maintaining world security and stability. ASEAN members welcome the commitment made by States parties to the NPT at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to preserving and strengthening the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) as a cornerstone of strategic stability.

We share the view that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory approach to missiles, as a contribution to international peace and security. We note that a Panel of Governmental Experts has been established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/33 A to consider the issue of missiles in all its aspects. We continue to believe that concerns related to missile proliferation are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements.

We note that a summit between the President of the Russian Federation and the President of the United States will take place in the near future. We continue to hope that early entry into force of the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II) will become a reality, and we look forward to its full implementation and to the early commencement of START III negotiations.

ASEAN wishes to recall that the 34th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting noted the progress that has been made in the negotiation of a draft protocol on the verification of the Bacteriological Weapons Convention, and looks forward to the fifth review of the Convention, to take place in November 2001. However, ASEAN notes with regret the lack of consensus at the twenty-fourth session of the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Convention on the draft composite text of a Biological Weapons Convention protocol. ASEAN also regrets that the Group could not adopt a final report on its work. ASEAN emphasizes the validity of the mandate that was given to the Ad Hoc Group and stresses that the only sustainable method for strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory legally binding agreement.

We also urge all States, which have neither ratified nor acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention to do so at the earliest possible date.

ASEAN countries note the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York, and we express our hope that the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference will be implemented effectively. At the same time, we regret that the Conference failed to achieve agreement on two core issues relating to the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons: strict control over private ownership of small arms; and prevention of the supply of small arms to non-State groups. In that connection, we join the Secretary-General's call on Member States to redouble their efforts towards a ban on supplying small arms to non-State actors. The Programme of Action that emerged from the Conference is a first step in the right direction. We look forward to the review conference to take stock of progress made and to consider further and more effective measures to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

We strongly believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones under the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba constitute positive steps towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned.

The ASEAN countries, through sustained efforts, have successfully established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. The Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone entered into force on 27 March 1997. A Protocol is annexed to the Treaty for accession by nuclear-weapon States. In welcoming the announcement by China, at the ASEAN post-ministerial conference in July 1999, of its readiness to accede to the Protocol, we wish to reiterate our call to nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol as soon as possible.

We welcome the progress in the implementation of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and stress the importance of direct consultations between ASEAN and the five nuclear-weapon States. We consider this to constitute significant progress towards encouraging accession by the nuclear-weapon States to the Protocol to the Treaty. In that connection, we welcome the first direct consultation between ASEAN and the nuclear-weapon States, which took place at Hanoi on 19 May 2001, and we reaffirm our support for that process. We call for continued consultations with the nuclear-weapon States. We also welcome the regional workshop sponsored by the Treaty and by the International Atomic Energy Agency on a strategic plan for radiation safety, held in Bangkok on 11 August 2001.

The ASEAN countries reiterate once again our support for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). We reiterate our deep concern over the lack of consensus in the deliberations held by the Disarmament Commission in 1999 on its agenda and objectives. We continue to call for further steps leading to the convening of the fourth special session, with the participation of all States Members of the United Nations, and we stress the need for SSOD IV to review

and assess the implementation of SSOD I while reaffirming its principles and priorities.

The ASEAN countries continue to attach special importance to confidence-building efforts among the countries in the region. ASEAN has been steadfastly undertaking concrete measures to enhance regional security through various initiatives at the ASEAN Regional Forum.

We note the positive developments that have taken place in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) process through various activities. We are encouraged that the ARF has adopted three papers, namely the Paper on Concepts and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy, the Terms of Reference for the ARF Experts/Eminent Persons Register, and the Paper on the Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair. This marks a significant achievement for the ARF process.

We also note with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation of the overlapping measures between confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy. Over the past few years numerous discussions and talks have been held to enhance mutual understanding among nations and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region. In this regard, we appreciate the activities undertaken by the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, as Chairman of the ARF, through formal and informal contacts with ARF participants as well as regional and international organizations, particularly the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and the Non-Aligned Movement. We will continue our strong support for the activities of the ARF, its Intersessional Support Group on Confidence-Building Measures, and the convening of the ARF Experts' Group Meeting on Transnational Crime, particularly in examining transnational crimes of concern to the region.

We reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. We are greatly dismayed at the continued impasse in the Conference on Disarmament. It is our hope that the States concerned will demonstrate their commitment to the process of disarmament and exercise the political will to overcome this deadlock and reach an amicable solution in the near future. The ASEAN countries believe that the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament is necessary, and we fully endorse the application of Thailand and the Philippines.

We believe that the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament is an urgent priority. We therefore call for the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices, under the aegis of the Special Coordinator.

Once again, we would like to express our appreciation to the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa for their effective contributions to international peace and security. The regional seminars and forums organized by these centres effectively contribute to the progress of the ongoing security and disarmament process in their respective regions.

It is now more urgent than ever for us, the international community, to strive for international peace and security, to redouble our efforts and to live up to our commitment to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We ASEAN countries once again confirm our commitment to work cooperatively to achieve these goals as a matter of utmost priority.

Mr. Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Chairman, allow me to congratulate you on your election, and I extend my congratulations to all of the other members of the Bureau as well.

I cannot begin my statement without first offering some thoughts on the significance of the work of this Committee in the light of the horrific acts perpetrated against this city on 11 September.

For the first time in history, we witnessed the commission of one of the worst acts ever of insane contempt for human life. The perpetrators used innocent passengers to crash aircraft into buildings, so as to take the largest possible number of human lives.

Peru has put an end to terrorism, but not before losing more than 25,000 human lives and incurring billions of dollars in property damage. We therefore feel as if it were our own the pain, helplessness and outrage experienced by a nation when it is attacked in such an infamous manner by a faceless enemy. We extend our solidarity to the people of the United States and wish them strength and wisdom during these trying times.

This year my country participated actively in the efforts of the United Nations to concretize, in the form of a document, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Indeed, this type of weapon was used for over a decade by the terrorist movements that sowed death and destruction in my country.

With this Programme of Action, we have at last before us a unique opportunity effectively to combat day-to-day violence and the kind of terrorism that has become globalized, knows no borders and jeopardizes the fundamental freedoms of human beings.

Another major aspect I wish to highlight is that our country is fully committed to the objectives embodied in the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. I am pleased to inform the Committee that on 13 September, Peru completed the destruction of 321,368 anti-personnel mines, which represented Peru's stockpile of these devices.

This process of destruction has relied on the support and verification of the representatives of the international community, the United Nations, the Organization Of American States, the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society. We have thus complied with article 4 of the Ottawa Convention one year ahead of the expiration of the mandatory four-year period established by that agreement.

Peru acknowledges the basic role of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, to which every year the States voluntarily report their imports and exports. Peru has submitted to the Secretary-General, for the first time in more than six years, the report on its military expenditures.

My delegation is firmly convinced that the restriction of weapons and disarmament in all the regions of the world are the only way to achieve an effective culture of conflict prevention. In this sense, I wish to refer to a subject of vital importance in the new foreign policy of my country.

In his speech to the Congress of the Republic on the day he assumed the presidency of Peru, President Alejandro Toledo proposed the limitation of military expenditures in South America in order to use those resources in the struggle against poverty. That is entirely logical, as South America is the Latin American region that spends the most on weaponry. In past decades, it was the locus of an arms race between its military Governments. Today, democracy prevails in South America. Democratic Governments do not create conflicts. The only conflicts they may have are the internal conflicts arising from poverty, which is vigorously present in South America.

The subregion has the highest rates of social inequality in the world. More than 40 per cent of its population lives on two or three dollars a day, according to the *Human Development Reports*. How, then, can democratic Governments continue to spend on weapons in these circumstances? And even more, how can they do so in the world's current worrying economic situation? This is all the more true since border disputes have nearly disappeared and been replaced by the Common Market of the South and Andean integration processes.

That is why we fully agreed with the Chilean representative when, on behalf of the countries of the Rio Group, he stated the firm conviction that measures should be adopted that will contribute to an effective and gradual limitation and monitoring of defence costs in the region, ultimately ensuring the availability of more resources for the social and economic development of our peoples. Our intention is therefore to pursue the proposal to limit weapons in South America in order to be able to devote these resources to improving the deplorable standard of living prevalent in most of the subregion. As a starting point, we have undertaken an exercise of weapons equivalence and transparency with Chile. We hope that this process will be extended to the other South American countries.

I conclude my speech by reasserting the role which Peru believes the Disarmament Commission has to play as the appropriate forum for dialogue and open debate on this subject. We pledge here and now to offer our total cooperation in and support for the work that we must perform during this year.

Mr. Reyes (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election to lead the work of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. We also thank your predecessor and the members of last year's Bureau for their excellent work. We are convinced that you, Ambassador Erdös, given your wide experience in

matters of disarmament and international security, will preside over our sessions with wisdom and even-handedness. To that end, you can rely on an excellent Bureau, all members of which deserve our fullest vote of confidence.

Colombia endorses the statement made by Ambassador Valdés, Permanent Representative of Chile, on behalf of the countries members of the Rio Group. In my statement, however, I wish to specify and expand on our national position on various items on the Committee's agenda that are of particular interest to our country.

We fully agree that the barbarism and magnitude of the acts of international terrorism carried out in this city and elsewhere in the United States on 11 September make it necessary to strengthen international security. Although this issue has been addressed by the Sixth Committee in recent years and in plenary meeting by the General Assembly over the past two weeks, Colombia believes that the First Committee must make a major contribution to eliminating this problem, which has become the most serious threat to peace and security today.

Above and beyond the ratification and implementation of the 12 conventions on this issue by all the States Members of our Organization, and of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) to prevent and suppress the financing of acts of international terrorism, which Colombia supported in its capacity as a member of the Security Council, this Committee must make an important contribution to preventing, combating and eliminating terrorist acts.

The scope of the terrorist assaults upon the people and Government of the United States, to whom we have expressed our deepest condolences and sense of solidarity, highlights the alarming possibility that such mass destruction may be repeated anywhere in the world. This gives added importance to such items on our agenda as the Biological Weapons Convention; the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We must echo the appeal for universal accession to these Conventions, for the explicit prohibition of the use of these weapons of mass destruction, for the restriction of the development of new technologies for such weaponry and, of course, for ensuring that existing chemical and bacteriological weapons do not fall into the hands of terrorists. The best guarantee of this is their total elimination. The countries that possess chemical weapons must proceed to destroy them, in compliance with the relevant Convention, and submit detailed plans on that process of destruction. We must also move forward in the inclusion of other weaponry in the scope of application of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and in the adoption of new protocols in this area. As to the Biological Weapons Convention, we continue to hope that the Ad Hoc Group will reach agreement on the verification protocol.

Progress on the issue of weapons of mass destruction has not been satisfactory, nor has it been satisfactory in the area of the most archetypal weapon of mass destruction, nuclear weapons. Not all of the international community has acceded yet to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation. of Nuclear Weapons or the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which are fundamental for progress in nuclear disarmament. It is now more crucial than ever that the international community, as a whole, shoulder its responsibilities towards these treaties.

Colombia reaffirms its conviction that the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is the best way to achieve international peace and security. We reject obsolete doctrines such as that of deterrence, and innovative but dangerous concepts, such as strategic alliances, since they are based on force or the threat of the use of force. We still believe that general and complete disarmament under effective international control is not utopian but, rather, a necessity that is increasingly indispensable in the face of the new challenges to peace and international security.

That is why we are particularly concerned that the Conference on Disarmament, a forum essential to negotiation, has not managed to reach agreement on a programme of work. It is an alarming sign that after three years of paralysis, the Conference has not been able to work on the issues that all of us consider to be essential and a priority for international security. Only by means of decision 1646 was it possible to continue with efforts that should avoid a further deterioration of an organ of vital importance for everyone.

Two items on the First Committee's agenda are fundamental for Colombia because of the domestic conflict our country is going through. These are the implementation of the Convention on anti-personnel

mines and the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In both these areas, we are pleased to report fundamental progress, although, no doubt, there is still a long way to go.

The third meeting of the States parties to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction, held in Managua last month, resulted in a significant reduction in the quantity of anti-personnel mines exported and in the number of countries that produce them. The meeting led to a significant increase in the quantity of mines destroyed and a considerable reduction in the number of victims. However, we urgently need universal accession to the Convention among those countries that produce the greatest number of mines of this kind.

Colombia had the honour of presiding over the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in this city this past July. As the President of the Conference, I can testify firsthand to the level of commitment and responsibility demonstrated by all delegations in order to adopt the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. I was also a witness to the flexibility and dedication of several delegations so that this could be achieved.

Fundamental to this achievement was the work of the Preparatory Commission of the Conference and of some of the Conference's Vice-Presidents, who helped facilitate the consensus, such as Ambassador Dos Santos of Mozambique, Ambassador Weston of the United Kingdom and Ambassador Sood of India. Ambassador Donowaki of Japan also deserves special recognition; he presided over the high-level segment and has devoted many years of his successful diplomatic career to an issue of such great importance for the world, and in particular, for countries, such as Colombia, that are victims of this scourge. The Secretariat and, specifically, Mr. Dhanapala and his team of collaborators in the Department of Disarmament Affairs also played a fundamental role in the Conference's success. As President, it is my duty to mention and thank them on behalf of myself and all delegations.

The Programme of Action approved by our Conference recognized the global dimensions of the problem and gave it the necessary priority on the international agenda. As well, the Programme of Action provided a roadmap to follow and it identified the route that States, civil society and the international community must follow to achieve the goal we have set for ourselves.

Now we must make progress on the full implementation of the measures adopted by the Programme of Action on the national, regional and global level, and make progress in the areas of international cooperation, the assistance States will require to implement these measures, and follow-up to the Conference.

My delegation, together with the delegations of South Africa and Japan, has decided to propose for the consideration of this forum a draft resolution on the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, by means of which we not only seek to add the political support of the General Assembly to the Programme of Action – which was approved by consensus during the Conference held last July — but also to start work on the Programme's development and multilateral implementation.

The draft resolution was formulated using language of consensus originating in the Programme of Action itself or in the most important resolutions on the issue from recent years. The proposal, the details of which I will have the opportunity to explain in detail during the meetings of the cosponsors scheduled for this week, envisages, inter alia, the convening of a review conference and biennial meetings. It calls on States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society to start taking the necessary measures to implement the Programme of Action. It invites them, in concert with the Secretary-General, to mobilize the resources and capabilities necessary to advance the Programme and to assist those States requiring assistance in the process of national implementation.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating the appeal I made at the beginning of Colombia's intervention in the general debate of the First Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations. We must take advantage of the consensus that currently exists in the United Nations on the total rejection of international terrorism in order to make progress on the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, so that we can prevent the terrorists from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Ahsan (Bangladesh): Mr. Chairman, let me begin by congratulating you on your unanimous election to preside over our deliberations. We are confident that under your guidance we will be able to successfully conclude our deliberations in the Committee. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his comprehensive statement on key issues facing the Committee this year.

We are participating in this year's general debate at a time when concerns about international security have come to occupy our minds as never before. The tragic events of last month in our host city reverberated around the world because of their devastating impact on the lives of thousands of innocent civilians and property. We reiterate here our deepest condolences for the victims and sympathy for the bereaved families.

In the aftermath of this incident, a strong awareness of the need for international cooperation has been generated among nations. Perhaps one could envisage a positive spin-off from this for cooperation in critical areas of disarmament. A quick look at the developments or lack of them over the past year would confirm that there is dire need for such cooperation.

According to the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, a persistent rise in global military expenditure, continued uncertainty in the strategic relationship between the leading nuclear-weapon Powers and a lingering divergence of views among States on priorities and perspectives block further movement on global security and disarmament.

Looking back at the past year, we are disappointed at the lack of progress that we expected in a number of areas. The ratification of the START II Treaty by Russia was a key development towards deeper cuts in strategic arms. The adoption of an action plan at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, and the adoption of the Programme of Action by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July were also encouraging developments. The entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the landmine Treaty have created a favourable climate for further progress in the past few years. In some ways, the 2000 NPT Review Conference did break new ground. Clear commitments were made. Specific unilateral, bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral measures have been identified within a comprehensive framework.

We have not seen the continuing wrangle on the programme of work diminish in the Conference on Disarmament, however. Efforts in the Conference on Disarmament to establish an appropriate subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament remain blocked. We believe that negotiation on a broad base is essential to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, and the Conference on Disarmament still remains the most appropriate forum for that purpose. Although not accompanied by a time frame, we consider the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States with regard to the abolition of their nuclear arsenals, made during the 2000 NPT Review Conference, to be vitally important; it must be give effect through an accelerated process of negotiation.

The Review Conference also referred to the need for prompt negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We believe that a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons would strengthen the legitimacy of the NPT and facilitate strategic arms reduction by halting the production of new fissile material.

Global strategic balance and stability remain a primordial concern for us. We are convinced that the role of the Treaty on anti-ballistic missile systems should be preserved to ensure the progressive development of the entire disarmament process. The implications of doing otherwise are enormous; that would be seriously destabilizing to the implementation and verification of strategic offensive nuclear arms treaties and to existing moratoriums on test explosions.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been the centrepiece of the international disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Soon after its adoption by the General Assembly in 1996, Bangladesh signed the treaty, and we ratified it in March last year. In accordance with the long-standing position of the Non-Aligned Movement, Bangladesh seeks a zero-yield, universal and effectively verifiable test-ban Treaty in order to realize the principles and objectives set for nuclear non-proliferation. We

consider the entry into force of the CTBT to be critical for preventing the development of new types of nuclear warheads and, hence, fundamental to the long-term viability of the NPT.

As a least developed country, Bangladesh reiterates its serious concern about the financial obligations that devolve on the States parties in connection with the implementation of the Treaty, including the expenses of the Preparatory Commission, the CTBT Organization and the verification regime, including the International Monitoring System and the Technical Secretariat. Some burden-sharing mechanism must be evolved to take care of this concern.

As a party to both the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, Bangladesh is fully aware of its obligations and takes them seriously. Not having acquired or developed any such weapons, we are fully in conformity with the provisions of those two Conventions. We emphasize the need for universal adherence to those Conventions by all States, including the major weapons countries.

Given the changing nature of conflict and violence, the relative importance of small arms and light weapons in sustaining and aggravating conflict has increased greatly. At the same time, their illicit manufacture, trafficking and transfer outside State control makes the problem of small arms a legitimate concern, transcending the bounds of national security and becoming an issue related to regional and international security. In the first ever Programme of Action on this problem, adopted in July this year by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, clear commitments were made by the participating States, with steps to be taken at the national, regional and global levels. We should not falter now in making good on those commitments.

Before I conclude, I would like to underline the importance of two issues. The first is regional disarmament. Unresolved problems in various regions, including our own, continue to stall progress in this area. We believe that confidence-building measures can truly help unblock the process. At the same time, we firmly hold the view that meaningful regional disarmament will depend to a large extent on understanding at the global level and firm steps taken by major Powers.

In this connection, we would like to stress the importance of United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, including the one for Asia and the Pacific in Kathmandu. We note with satisfaction the activities of this Centre over the past year, and share the Secretary-General's belief that the mandate of the Centre remains valid and that it could be a useful instrument for fostering a climate of cooperation and disarmament in the region. At the same time, we firmly believe that the best way for the centre to do that would be for it to operate from Kathmandu. We note the outcome of the consultation by the Secretariat in this regard, in particular the readiness of the Government of Nepal to bear the annual operational costs once the Centre has been physically moved to Kathmandu. We call for early completion of the remaining tasks in order for the Centre to be relocated to Kathmandu.

In the context of persistent reliance on the security role of nuclear weapons and the deterrence they are believed to provide, there is a risk that the steps contained in the action plan adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference will remain an indication of good intentions without becoming firm commitments. Here, I would like to stress the important role that civil society, including non-governmental organizations, can play in sensitizing public opinion and policy makers in relevant countries. We continue to support their role in advancing the cause of general and complete disarmament.

For Bangladesh, the commitment to the goal of general and complete disarmament flows from our constitutional obligation. Of most practical relevance for us is the irrefutable reality of the relationship between disarmament and development. In view of declining levels of official development assistance, the context of reducing military expenditure in favour of a development budget assumes renewed importance. The noble objective of disarmament — that of saving humanity from the scourge of war and destruction — inspires us in our war against poverty and underdevelopment. Small cuts in military expenditure by major Powers can mean substantive assistance to our development efforts. We believe that our common endeavour should be to continue towards achieving this objective.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. We would also like extend our congratulations to the other

members of the Bureau, who will be working side by side with you.

Uruguay would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Chile, who spoke on behalf of the Rio Group and dealt with a number of issues on our agenda at this session. Without prejudice to that statement or to the statements that we will be making during this structured debate in our capacity as holders of the current chairmanship of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), we would like to set out some ideas on issues of interest to Uruguay.

The terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September, although not perpetrated with weapons included on our agenda, demonstrate the enormous danger of maintaining arsenals of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. More than ever before, we must now define a policy and adopt effective measures to eradicate any chance of illicit access to such weapons, the possibility of which is an extremely grave threat to a civilian population that is increasingly exposed to acts of indiscriminate violence.

The international community must step up its cooperation to ensure the strict monitoring of nuclear material, while improving its capability to intercept illicit trafficking thereof. Our efforts must be four-pronged: first, to prevent nuclear facilities and materials from being used for illegitimate purposes; secondly, to control and strictly monitor nuclear residues and to prevent their diversion for other purposes; thirdly, to explore new technologies to forestall nuclear reactor accidents; and fourthly, to improve all security measures relating to the international transport of radioactive materials.

At a time when all efforts to eliminate the nuclear threat are welcome, we cannot but express our total agreement with Secretary-General Kofi Annan as to the need to identify means of achieving nuclear disarmament as soon as possible. We continue to deem unacceptable the reasons put forward by some States to justify their non-ratification of major treaties dealing with non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament or nuclear reduction.

Uruguay once again emphasized the importance of multilateralism, and of the United Nations as the indispensable forum, for coming to grips with the new challenges entailed in international security. The Conference on Disarmament needs to transform itself into a new platform for constructive discussions that will take multilateral disarmament out of its state of current paralysis. We continue to build our hopes on the results of the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Review Conference to be held next year. We hope that it will indeed make the progress that all of us yearn for.

The zone of peace set up by the Southern Common Market, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to which Uruguay is also party, constitute a legal shield that guarantees countries that do not possess nuclear weapons a certain margin of security. But for this system of security to be truly effective, it must achieve a universality that it still does not have, because a number of States are reluctant to become parties. We must step up efforts to expand nuclear-weapon-free zones geographically through the adoption of multilateral, bilateral or unilateral steps, but these efforts will prove useless if they do not go hand in hand with the political determination to comply with commitments entered into. We must seek a way of convincing the States that are still reluctant to join in the endeavour of ridding the world of nuclear weapons that the attainment of that goal will redound to the benefit of their own security and the security of one and all.

Although there is a non-proliferation moratorium, we cannot be content with informal machinery that does not live up to the quest for universal commitment. Uruguay has clearly demonstrated its commitment and identification with the cause of totally eliminating nuclear weapons and other particularly perverse or dangerous weapons. In recent months, the Uruguayan Government has ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Thus, we have swelled the ranks of those countries that have already taken steps to strengthen the legal disarmament regime so laboriously built up over the last few years. We must proceed immediately to take steps to build a disarmament architecture that would build a new paradigm of collective defence based on the principles and objectives set out for achieving non-proliferation and disarmament.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): It is particularly pleasant for me to see you, Mr. Chairman, known to all as an excellent diplomat, presiding over the work of this Committee entrusted with disarmament and international security. I would like to extend to you my most wholehearted congratulations and my sincere wishes for success in your difficult task. I am sure you will be able to successfully carry out this job to the satisfaction of all member States. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the members of the Bureau and to assure them of my delegation's full support. I would like to pay a wholehearted tribute to your predecessor, Mr. U Mya Than of Myanmar, for the remarkable way in which he headed the work of this Committee during the previous session. Finally, my sincere thanks go to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his commitment and valuable contribution to the cause of disarmament.

I cannot fail to reiterate on this occasion the energetic condemnation by Algeria of the terrorist attacks that have plunged the United States of America into mourning, and to express once again our deep sympathy and solidarity to the Government and the people of the United States.

The new context that emerged at the end of the cold war and its ideological confrontation promoted the advent of a climate of détente and cooperation that offered better prospects for dialogue and consultation in disarmament, which remains at the heart of the problems of international peace and security.

We have witnessed a qualitative change in thinking; this has been translated into a relaxation of positions, which has led in the field of disarmament to a liberation of initiatives that for a long time were held hostage by the narrow interplay between Powers. The encouraging results that were reached during the last decade, made manifest by the conclusion of a series of treaties, both multilateral and bilateral, have given both impetus and real content to the disarmament process.

Efforts to free humankind from the spectre of weapons of mass destruction were enhanced with the attainment of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (START I and START II), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the historic commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States during the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in April 2000 to totally eliminate their nuclear arsenals. However, the considerable progress made only partially covers our concerns. Similarly, the relative euphoria to which this progress gave rise cannot make us in any way forget that the road to be travelled in the field of nuclear disarmament, which remains the top priority for all of us, will be long and arduous.

To reach the general and complete disarmament that we so ardently wish for, bold action will have to be undertaken, such as promoting a renewed strategic approach that would enshrine the end of the antiquated doctrine of nuclear deterrence; exclude any initiative or measure that could jeopardize the climate of détente and weaken what has been patiently attained over the course of the last few years in disarmament; and effectively address priority issues for the attainment of disarmament, based strongly on scrupulous respect for the principles contained in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

We will do this even more easily if the commitment undertaken by nuclear-weapon States to totally eliminate their arsenals is begun to be put into practice, and if the nuclear-weapon States undertake to implement article VI of the NPT, which is binding in our view, by engaging in good faith in negotiations to totally eliminate nuclear weapons, as strongly supported by the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice.

It is also extremely urgent that the Conference on Disarmament be reactivated and reach agreement on its programme of work, and that, as the sole multilateral negotiation body, it tackle the essential questions before it, such as the preparation of binding legal instruments on the prohibition of the production of fissile material and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

From this point of view, my delegation, which was pleased at the nomination on 22 June 2001 of the special coordinators entrusted with the re-examination of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, the expansion of its composition and the improvement of its operation, must express its disappointment at the continuation of differences that prevent this body from carrying out the duties entrusted to it. Furthermore, we believe that the bilateral approach should not marginalize, but should supplement and strengthen, the

multilateral approach. In that regard, we believe that respect for the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty can only strengthen the disarmament process.

It is comforting to see today that nuclear-weapon-free zones have been established under the Tlatelolco Treaty, the Rarotonga Treaty, the Bangkok Treaty, the Pelindaba Treaty, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia and Africa. These are achievements that fortunately complement each other and have thus reduced considerably non-proliferation risks and contributed to strengthening international peace and security.

In our view, my delegation salutes the laudable efforts undertaken by the Central Asian countries in order to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone, as well as the efforts of Mongolia, which has adopted nuclear-weapon-free State status.

We hope that similar efforts will be agreed to in other regions, particularly the Middle East, in order to achieve a world fully free of weapons of mass destruction.

The lack of progress in creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is a grave concern for us. The achievement of this objective depends quite clearly on the acceptance of Israel — the only nation at the regional level that is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — of the need to eliminate its nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that it has and to submit its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Our call for general and complete disarmament is based on our firm conviction that there is no alternative to disarmament, the only choice that will definitively free humanity from the threat of its extinction, guarantee peace and security in the world and release resources allocated to weapons for economic and social development.

Algeria, which devotes only a small percentage of its revenues to national defence expenditures, has chosen to promote research development for the peaceful use of nuclear energy in various fields of socio-economic activities and is associated with various disarmament endeavours, including nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional ones.

We have, once again, recently provided proof of our firm commitment to disarmament by proceeding in December 2000 to ratify two conventions — the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. I wish, in this context, to take this opportunity to reiterate Algeria's intention to ratify the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty in the near future.

It is also in this spirit that my delegation welcomes the beginning almost three months ago here of the process of the fight against the phenomenon of trafficking in small arms and light weapons, whose destabilizing effects seriously threaten international peace and security.

In order to propose realistic and appropriate measures, the programme of action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which has our full support, has laid the foundation of international cooperation and has marked the path of common action and solidarity in order to eradicate that scourge, the main supply source of terrorism and of conflict zones.

In this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to pay a strong tribute to Ambassador Camilo Reyes of Colombia and Ambassador Carlos dos Santos of Mozambique for the remarkable efforts deployed for the success of this important Conference, just as we were pleased at the holding in New York from 30 July to 3 August 2001, of the first meeting of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles in All Their Aspects. This initiative is an important step forward toward taking up, within the framework of the United Nations system, the problem of missiles, which, over and above their peaceful uses, are primarily vectors of weapons of mass destruction of a truly lethal nature.

Following these positive changes of the last few years that have strengthened the need for a renewed strategic vision of peace and stability throughout the world, it is necessary that international security be separated from military factors and go beyond security concepts based on nuclear weapons.

In the interdependent world that is being built, where economic and social development appears to be the real foundation of peace and coexistence among peoples, the international community as a whole is called on to face together the new challenges of the

globalization of trade and the disappearance of borders, to rid humanity of the scourge of war and the new dangers that threaten it in the form of terrorism, drug trafficking, pandemics and organized crime and to expand to all States of the world the prosperity and stability that prevail in the northern part of our planet.

This is Algeria's wish, and these are the essential principles around which my country's policy is articulated and which it has always followed with a sincere will, aimed at favouring dialogue and consultation and strengthening security within the traditional frameworks of inclusion and solidarity. That is why Algeria is working together with other Maghreb countries to establish a stable, united, homogenous and prosperous whole among the five countries that make up the Arab Maghreb Union.

That is also why Algeria is fully committed to the settlement of conflicts in Africa, why it works to strengthen security and cooperation between the countries of the continent, so as to be able to respond to the demands of economic and social development and why it has taken an active role in the creation of the African Union and the launching of the New African Initiative, enabling the African continent to begin its economic, social and political rehabilitation. It is also for that reason the blossoming of the "lake of peace and cooperation" of the Mediterranean has always been an essential objective of Algeria's international action.

Indeed, our desire to make the Mediterranean Basin a haven of peace, cooperation and security finds its expression in our support for the Barcelona Declaration, the manifestation of the new perception of the Euro-Mediterranean as a whole, and for other consultation mechanisms that emphasize recognition of the historical nature of the relations between the countries of the two shores.

The commitment expressed by my country to the process of construction of the Euro-Mediterranean space, undertaken six years ago, is based strongly on its deep conviction that only joint and concerted action can consolidate stability and security in this region, and from that, to lay down, within the framework of a global approach, the basis of solidarity and cooperation based on the community of interests and a mutually advantageous partnership.

While we are aware of the complexity of the work of disarmament and the enormous efforts that we still need to agree to in order to overcome the pitfalls in the way of its completion, we are no less convinced that general and complete disarmament remains the only salubrious option for future generations as long as a spirit of solidarity and cooperation prevails among peoples and it is recognized that the security of some cannot be achieved at the expense of the underdevelopment and poverty of others.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at the current session. I am convinced that, with your rich experience and outstanding diplomatic skills, you will guide this session to success. The Chinese delegation assures you of its full cooperation with and support for you and other members of the Bureau. Please also allow me to express our appreciation for the excellent work of the Chairman at the last session, Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar. I also take this opportunity to thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Dhanapala and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, under his leadership, for the unremitting efforts they have made in promoting the international cause of disarmament. We hope that the Department will play a bigger role in the future.

This session is being held against a special backdrop. On 11 September New York City and Washington, D.C., were hit by a series of terrorist attacks, which caused a tremendous number of casualties, including Chinese, and huge property losses. The Chinese Government and people were deeply shocked, and express their deep sympathy and condolences to the victims of the attacks. The Chinese Government condemns and opposes all forms of terrorist activities by any country, organization, group or individual. International terrorism not only causes severe humanitarian disasters, but also poses threats to the security of all countries and world peace. The Chinese Government supports strengthened efforts by the international community to combat terrorism, including the endeavour to completely eliminate its root causes, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and other universally recognized principles of international law. We stand ready to cooperate with other countries in the fight against terrorism.

The terrorist attacks in the United States have once again highlighted the importance of international cooperation in safeguarding world peace and the

security of countries. They clearly show that in the twenty-first century, when security challenges are increasingly diversified, with the rapid development of science and technology and the steady deepening of economic globalization, only international cooperation can bring about real security. Establishing a new concept of security based on international cooperation has become a pressing task of our time.

International arms control and disarmament naturally fit into such a new security concept. With the concerted efforts of the international community in the past decades, a basic legal system governing international arms control and disarmament has been put in place. It has become part and parcel of the global collective security architecture centred around the United Nations, and plays a crucial role in maintaining the global and regional security order. In the new situation, the integrity and authority of this international legal system should not be undermined. Instead, the system should be strengthened and improved. Any act that detracts from this legal system will prove to be short-sighted, and will only add uncertainty and unpredictability to the international security landscape, and that will serve nobody's security interests.

The terrorist attacks in the United States will have far-reaching ramifications for international security. In the face of this horrendous human tragedy, every Government needs to seriously reflect upon its own security strategy and priorities. The bloodshed and the terror have amply demonstrated that a Maginot-type missile defence simply is not the way to counter the threat of terrorism. Such a defence can only bring to the world a false sense of security, mistrust among nations and ensuing detriment to international security. Here we call upon the country concerned to heed the appeal of the international community and stop the development and deployment of destabilizing missile defence systems.

For the purpose of safeguarding world peace and security, the international community should take concerted action to strengthen international mechanisms aimed at preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). To this end, it is essential to secure universal participation in the common endeavour, which requires an approach of cooperation rather than confrontation, and a uniform standard rather than double or even multiple standards. It is now imperative to strictly abide by and continue improving the international legal instruments in the field of non-proliferation.

The Chinese side deeply regrets the fact that, after nearly seven years of negotiation, the very basic approach of the proposed protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has been negated, leading to the suspension of the negotiations. For this does not help forging international consensus on non-proliferation, and can only be detrimental to international non-proliferation efforts.

On the issue of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), it is our hope that all countries that have not done so sign and ratify the treaty, and fully support the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO).

As a means of delivery of WMD, missiles have drawn increasingly greater attention from the international community. Just as in the case of WMD, the only effective way to address missile proliferation is to build a comprehensive and non-discriminatory multilateral mechanism. China agrees to a leading role for the United Nations in dealing with the missile issue, supports the work of its Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles, and stands ready to make its contribution to this process.

Outer space belongs to all humanity, and mankind has a common desire for its peaceful utilization. However, it is most worrying that outer space is faced with an increasing danger of weaponization. As a means of pursuing unilateral military supremacy, a strategic concept on the control of space and related long-term plans have been developed, with a view to putting weapons into outer space. Such moves will lead to grave consequences. Indeed, the prevention of the weaponization, of and an arms race in, outer space has stood out as an urgent and realistic issue. Therefore, the international community must act without delay to negotiate and conclude as soon as possible a necessary international legal instrument so as to protect outer space from the threat of war. The Chinese delegation holds the view that, as the only multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is the best venue for such negotiations.

Complete nuclear disarmament and a nuclear-weapon-free world is the common aspiration of all people across the world. The twentieth century was a

century of nuclear weapons, and the twenty-first century should be a century free of nuclear weapons. In this regard, countries having the largest and most sophisticated nuclear arsenals shoulder special and primary responsibilities. Progress in nuclear disarmament on their part will create favourable conditions for the medium-sized and small nuclear-weapon States to join in the process. The Chinese delegation appreciates the expressed intention of the country concerned to reduce its nuclear weapons unilaterally. In the meantime, it must be pointed out that genuine nuclear disarmament must be irreversible and verifiable. Therefore, it should be carried out in a legally binding manner.

The end of the cold war marked the drawing to a close of international relations characterized by the confrontation between military blocs. For the nuclear-weapon States to abandon cold-war thinking, they should, first and foremost, fundamentally readjust their offensive nuclear strategies by renouncing their policy of first use of nuclear weapons. The Chinese Government therefore wishes to renew its appeal for the five nuclear-weapon States to undertake never to be the first to use nuclear weapons against one another, and to undertake, unconditionally and in a legally binding manner, never to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. That will help enhance mutual trust and cooperation among countries, and facilitate the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and the establishment of a fair and rational international security order.

We hope that all countries of the world, and the nuclear-weapon States in particular, remain loyal to the objective of establishing a world free of nuclear weapons by consolidating, rather than undermining, strategic stability and mutual trust, which are essential to any progress in nuclear disarmament; and by advancing, rather than impeding, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Furthermore, we should proceed to negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty and an agreement on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States, banning the first use and other use of nuclear weapons, as well as on withdrawing nuclear weapons stationed on the territory of other countries and abandoning nuclear-umbrella and nuclear-sharing policies. Together with all these measures, the process of nuclear-weapon reduction should be further pursued until the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons is achieved.

As an original State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), China attaches great importance to the implementation of the Convention and has strictly and faithfully carried out its obligations under the Convention. We are happy to see that, with joint efforts by the international community, the implementation of the Convention has on the whole been good in the four years since it entered into force. China hopes that those that have not yet done so will sign and ratify the CWC at an early date, and that States parties will conscientiously fulfil their obligations with a view to achieving comprehensive, just and effective implementation.

China was a victim of the use of chemical weapons. Even today, the large quantities of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China are still posing a serious threat to the security of the Chinese people and to their ecological environment. In recent years, some progress has been made in the disposal of the abandoned chemical weapons. However, that progress still falls far short of the expectations of the Chinese people and the requirements of the provisions of the CWC. It is our hope that the country concerned will work out a comprehensive and practical destruction programme as soon as possible in accordance with its obligations under the Convention, which should guarantee the safety of the local people and the environment so that the substantive destruction process can be started and the grave danger posed by the abandoned chemical weapons can be eliminated within the time frame set forth in the Convention.

In recent years, the illicit trade in small arms has increasingly become a focus of international attention. The illicit traffic in and the excessive accumulation of small arms exacerbate wars and regional conflicts, obstruct post-war reconstruction and cause severe humanitarian problems. Last July, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was convened, marking a new stage in international efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms. China, which has always supported the international effort in this regard, participated constructively in the Conference. China will faithfully carry out the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference and work with others to press ahead with the relevant process. China welcomes

the Firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and is positively considering the question of signing the Protocol.

The Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will be held at the end of this year. China will actively participate in the relevant deliberations and, together with other delegations, will try to find better ways and means to implement the obligations of the Convention and to resolve the humanitarian concerns caused by certain conventional weapons. It is our view that the most important task now is to concentrate our resources and attention on enhancing the universality and effectiveness of the Convention.

China has always held that the issue of landmines bears on both humanitarian concerns and the legitimate need of sovereign States for self-defence. The two must be balanced, and neither can be neglected. China understands the humanitarian concerns of the international community about civilian casualties caused by landmines and supports the international efforts to address this issue. China has taken an active part in international assistance to mine-clearance actions. This year, China donated mine-detection and clearance equipment to mine-stricken countries such as Angola, Cambodia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia and Rwanda.

In the past century, mankind experienced the scourges of two world wars and the misery of cold-war confrontation. Looking into the new century, humanity is still faced with numerous severe challenges and tests. Creating a long-term stable, secure, reliable and peaceful international environment remains a common task of the international community. The basic tenet of China's foreign policy is to maintain world peace and promote common development. No matter how the world changes, China will not alter its foreign policy of peace. In the new century, China wishes to work together with other countries to promote international arms control and disarmament.

Mr. Guerreiro (Brazil): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman — and through you the other members of the Bureau — on your election. Please accept our best wishes and the assurances that you will have the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation during our work. It is also with satisfaction that I refer to the dedication and ability with which Ambassador U Mya Than conducted the work of the First Committee in the year 2000. A word of recognition should also go to Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala and his team at the Department for Disarmament Affairs, from whom Brazil has seen a continued demonstration of professionalism and support for the cause of disarmament. We thank Ambassador Dhanapala for his statement before the First Committee.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the Rio Group by the representative of Chile.

Let me once again reiterate our profound sympathy and solidarity to all those who suffered as a result of the tragic loss of life caused by the grievous terrorist attacks of 11 September. Those despicable acts were greeted with outrage in Brazil. Our thoughts go out to the victims and their families.

The attacks on the United States of America sought to sow fear and paralysis. They failed. The sober but determined attitude of the American people has inspired respect and solidarity, and has helped to forge a global sentiment that the time has come to deal decisively with terrorism.

The year since the holding of the last session of the First Committee has been a sombre one in the disarmament field. There are distressing signs of an increasing lack of interest from the major players regarding progress within the multilateral framework. The continued paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament is an eloquent example of a gradual disengagement by key States and of the disappearance of the motivation needed to promote coordinated action in the disarmament arena. It is morally imperative that all the words of commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation be translated into deeds.

We welcome unilateral initiatives leading to reduction in arsenals, but they cannot be, and are not meant to be, substitutes for the international disarmament architecture. No unilateral measure can replace the stability, certainty and foreseeability of a multilaterally negotiated instrument.

We are concerned about the tendency to avoid the multilateral approach and to deal unilaterally or bilaterally with matters that are by nature universal. Issues relating to international security touch all countries and are of universal interest. We need

therefore to produce multilateral responses to universal problems. Measures that affect the international security environment should be discussed multilaterally, which would foster collective responsibility and strengthen the mechanisms that the community of nations created for that purpose.

In our view, the only truly effective defence against weapons of mass destruction is their total elimination. The proliferation of shields runs counter to the current logic of the advantages of disarmament. A safer world is not one that has plenty of defensive systems against weapons of mass destruction. It is one that does not need such defences, for weapons of mass destruction would not exist. We should strive to curb proliferation and to fulfil the disarmament obligations contained in treaties, so that there will be fewer arms threatening humanity.

In the aftermath of the horrendous terrorist attacks of 11 September, much has been said about the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists. Brazil shares those concerns and welcomes initiatives aimed at diminishing the risk. Terrorism should be vigorously fought and should be deprived of all its tools of action. In the search for means to combat international terrorism, we highlight the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, as well as of national and international control over technologies used in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction.

We must be careful, however, that the discussion about the possibility of the use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists does not result in the implicit justification of the indefinite retention of such weapons by States. We view any use of weapons of mass destruction as misuse. They should be eliminated in accordance with international obligations.

We fully support the practical steps in the disarmament area identified by the Secretary-General in his statement to the General Assembly last week on international terrorism. We agree with his assessment that "there is much we can do to help prevent future terrorist acts carried out with weapons of mass destruction" (*A/56/PV.12*), and we agree that there is a need to strengthen global norms against the use or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Brazil is ready to work, in the First Committee and in other disarmament forums, towards the implementation of all the objectives the Secretary-General identified, in particular regarding efforts to ensure the universality, verification and full implementation of key treaties relating to weapons of mass destruction, including those outlawing chemical and biological weapons and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Turning to the agenda before us, we hope that the First Committee will be able to foster a constructive and forward-looking approach to pressing issues in the area of disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. More than one year after the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and the Millennium Summit, little political will has been shown that would prove that those were not isolated events and that the commitments made on those occasions will be followed up.

Brazil is also of the view that all States should abide by their commitments to nuclear non-proliferation, in particular those addressed in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. In that vein, we call upon States to avoid taking steps that could imply tacit recognition of nuclear-weapon status, thus undermining the international community's determination to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

A nuclear-weapon-free world is an aspiration and a common responsibility of the entire international community. The objective of turning nuclear weapons illegitimate is furthered by extending, through new nuclear-weapon-free zones, the geographical space where they are illegal. We support the consolidation of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the creation of new ones. With that in mind, we will once again present a draft resolution on a southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons, which we are sure will continue to enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of Member States.

Brazil stresses, as we did through the ministerial communiqué of the New Agenda Coalition read out yesterday by the representative of South Africa, the importance of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) in the promotion and maintenance of international stability, and we call upon all States to refrain from any action that could lead to a new nuclear arms race or that could impact negatively on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We expect that the upcoming Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) can provide momentum for universal adherence to that instrument, for continued respect for the spirit of the Treaty and for the observance of unilateral moratoriums until the Treaty has entered into force.

I am personally honoured at having been chosen to chair the work of the Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects. I am glad to report that the exchange of ideas during the Panel's first session was very encouraging. The group of experts will make every effort to submit to the General Assembly at its next session its contribution to the international discussion of the issue of missiles. In our understanding, the question of missiles should be dealt with in a process involving the broadest possible participation.

In the chemical weapons area, we welcome the recent approval by the General Assembly of the agreement on the relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We expect to hear a report from the Director-General of the OPCW on the work of that organization. We fully support the efforts of the Director-General, Mr. José Mauricio Bustani, to lead the organization in an impartial, even-handed and competent manner. The full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention must be seen as an urgent endeavour of the international community with a view to eliminating all chemical arsenals, verifying industrial activities using sensitive chemicals, promoting increasing cooperation for peaceful uses, and controlling the international exchange of sensitive chemicals, a task entrusted to the OPCW but regrettably not yet implemented despite the wish of the majority of States parties.

Brazil is deeply disappointed at the lack of consensus regarding the draft protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BCW), as proposed by Mr. Tibor Toth, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Convention. We can no longer continue to ignore the threats to security posed by biological weapons; we must work together to reinforce the BWC regime. We expect the fifth Review Conference of the BWC, to be held at Geneva in November and December, to succeed in identifying the necessary tools to prevent proliferation and to ensure biological disarmament.

For Brazil, the provisions contained in the draft protocol would doubtless contribute to strengthening international security in the biological field. We should do our utmost not to totally squander the product of more than six years of intensive work. No other technology of mass destruction is as geographically widespread as the biological one. That explains why effective international action against biological weapons needs to be universal. Yet, to be universal, agreements must be seen as legitimate and must be negotiated by all States. There is no alternative to multilateralism when it comes to countering the risks of the proliferation of biological weapons.

In the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, it is with satisfaction that we bring to the attention of the Committee the fact that in July, Brazil and Argentina celebrated the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, a landmark that attests to the excellent level of transparency and friendship between our two countries. On the same occasion, a joint declaration was signed that created the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for the Application of Nuclear Energy, which aims at intensifying cooperation on the peaceful application of nuclear science and technologies.

The United Nations disarmament calendar for the first semester of this year was marked by preparations for and the holding of the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Brazil welcomes the adoption of the Programme of Action and the launching of a follow-up process which will enable the commitments made during the Conference to be translated into action. We see the Conference as a first step towards global treatment of the issue. It also marks the definite inclusion of the question of small arms in the international agenda.

A great deal needs to be done. Regional implementation will be important, as will the adoption of measures at the national level that are consistent with the Programme of Action. We share the views expressed by the President of the Conference and by the Secretary-General that the objectives of the meeting would have been better met had the Conference been able to adopt provisions on civilian possession of small arms and on the banning of their sale to actors other than Governments or entities duly authorized by them.

Some weeks ago, in Managua, during the Third Meeting of States Parties to the landmine Convention, we had the opportunity to reiterate our commitment to the banning of anti-personnel landmines. We consider the universalization of the mine-ban treaty to be an important goal, and our political support has been coupled with practical measures. Brazil has also assisted in mine-clearance operations by providing personnel in the context of United Nations missions in Angola and in South and Central America.

The First Committee opens this week at a moment when security aspects dominate the international agenda as they have not done in decades. It is a moment of challenge for the international community, and a situation in which the United Nations is called upon to live up to its responsibilities. It is also an occasion that has united the membership, thus opening opportunities to build, from adversity, a more stable world.

As frightful as it may be, it is not only the threat of nuclear, biological or chemical terrorism that should make us renew our efforts for the elimination of those weapons. It is the conviction that by acting decisively now, we will be able to free future generations from the threat of this scourge.

Terrorism is serving as a wake-up call for Governments about the need to strengthen non-proliferation and disarmament measures. The international commitment to general and complete disarmament should be pursued with the same resolve, vigour and unity as we will muster to combat international terrorism.

That is what we expect the First Committee to do.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): At the outset, Mr. Chairman, I should like to join preceding speakers in extending to you my delegation's warmest congratulations on your well-deserved election and to pledge our full support and cooperation. We are confident that your diplomatic skill, personal experience in the field of disarmament and dedication will bring the Committee's work to a successful conclusion. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau on their election.

My delegation would also like to express its deep gratitude and appreciation to Ambassador U Mya Than of Myanmar for his able guidance of the work of the Committee last year.

Before proceeding with my statement, allow me to express once again my delegation's sincere condolences to the people of the United States for the terrible loss of human life and our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims and to the people of our host city, New York.

This year the General Assembly, including this Committee, is conducting its work in unconventional circumstances, at a time when international peace and security are being threatened by the unprecedented terrorist attacks of 11 September. These tragic events have highlighted the role that this Committee is called upon to play in promoting international peace and security through multilateral disarmament and arms control processes. My delegation expresses the hope that the Committee's deliberations and discussions will be most productive in promoting the goal of achieving general and complete disarmament as well as in the search for a new, viable concept of security, addressing both existing and emerging threats at the dawn of this century.

In my intervention today, I should like to focus on some issues that, in this delegation's view, should be of priority importance on the current agenda of the Committee.

In our view, given the nature of current security threats, the international community must make greater efforts to reduce and eliminate weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. My delegation shares the view that there is a real need to make tangible progress in the areas of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation — progress which, ironically, has eluded us in the post-cold-war decade.

The States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) rightly concluded last year that

> "the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons." (*NPT/CONF.2000/28, vol. I, part I, p. 15, para. 2*)

My delegation fully subscribes to that view. World leaders also underlined their determination in the 2000 Millennium Declaration to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction. Thus the political will seems to be evident. However, some important international instruments aimed at promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation still await either

entry into force or effective implementation. Therefore, it is vitally important for the international community to translate the manifested political will into reality, to ensure that the unequivocal commitments solemnly made with regard to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and the steps to be taken in the interim, are practically honoured.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which are important prerequisites for strengthening global peace and security, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of paramount importance. The States that have not yet done so, in particular those whose ratification is needed for its entry into force, should sign and ratify it as soon as possible and, pending its entry into force, uphold a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosions. My delegation expresses the hope that the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into force of the CTBT, to be held during the forthcoming general debate, will give the necessary political impetus in that regard.

Mongolia continues to believe that, in the absence of an alternative solution, the unilateral abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, so far the cornerstone of global strategic stability, could adversely affect the overall existing strategic balance, with all of the ensuing consequences. Therefore, Mongolia calls upon the parties to the ABM Treaty, pending agreement on a mutually acceptable solution, to refrain from any measure that might undermine the spirit of the Treaty. With respect to strategic arms reductions, Mongolia underlines the importance of early entry into force of the START II Treaty and looks forward to further practical steps that could lead to substantial and meaningful reductions in nuclear arsenals within the START III process.

Still on nuclear disarmament, my delegation also urges the Conference on Disarmament to engage in earnest negotiations on an early conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty. Pending the negotiation of that treaty, we would welcome a moratorium on the production of weapons-grade fissile materials and greater transparency through disclosure of present stocks. In this context, my delegation reiterates its call upon the United Nations to establish, as a transparency and confidence-building measure, a register of all stocks of weapons-grade fissile material as an important addition to the existing United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Bearing in mind the fact that the credibility of the CTBT and other international instruments prohibiting and destroying weapons of mass destruction depends to a great extent on the effectiveness of their verification regimes, Mongolia welcomes and supports efforts aimed at ensuring reliable operation of the existing control and monitoring systems under the CTBT and the Chemical Weapons Convention and the undertaking of measures to improve the verification mechanism of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). In this connection, my delegation regrets that the talks on a verification protocol to strengthen the 1972 BWC have failed and expresses the hope that further work will be taken up at the upcoming Fifth Review Conference of the parties to be held next month.

Unfortunately, the military doctrines of nuclear-weapon States still place emphasis on nuclear weapons. Therefore, Mongolia supports the adoption of such steps as de-alerting nuclear weapons, the removal of nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles, joint undertakings by the nuclear-weapon Powers of a pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and some other well-known measures as essential safety measures to reduce the risk of unauthorized or miscalculated use of nuclear weapons. We also underline the need to provide legally binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear States parties to the NPT.

The tragedy of 11 September was a serious signal of the increasing danger of possible use by non-state actors of weapons of mass destruction. As the Secretary-General underlined last week in the debate on terrorism, a single attack involving a nuclear or biological weapon could have killed millions. Today's stark reality proves that there is a growing possibility of non-State actors acquiring nuclear, biological or chemical weapons for terrorist purposes. Therefore, besides the legal instruments prohibiting weapons of mass destruction, it is vitally important today for the international community to promote closer cooperation to upgrade the physical protection of nuclear material, combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources and enhance the protection and control of nuclear facilities against acts of terrorism and sabotage. In addition to the nuclear disarmament treaties, my delegation urges the international community to finalize as soon as possible the draft

convention against nuclear terrorism and the comprehensive convention on international terrorism, as well as to speed up the entry into force of the Statute of the International Criminal Court and of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The consolidation of existing and the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones are important factors for strengthening non-proliferation as well as regional stability and security. Mongolia, based on its unique geopolitical location, strives to make its modest contribution to this cause. I would like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to the Department for Disarmament Affairs, especially its Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, for organizing last month in Sapporo a meeting of independent experts of the P5 and Mongolia to look into ways and means of strengthening Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. The experts have concluded that further steps need to be taken at the international level to strengthen that status. We believe that the institutionalization of Mongolia's status would be an important measure towards strengthening predictability, confidence-building and non-proliferation in the region.

Mongolia fully shares the legitimate concerns of the international community over the illicit trafficking in and global proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are the principal instruments of death throughout the world, especially in the regions affected by armed conflicts. Mongolia attaches great importance to the outcome of the first-ever United Nations Conference on this issue, held last July in New York. The Programme of Action adopted at the Conference by consensus is an important step towards preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. At the same time, my delegation, like many others, regrets the failure of the Conference to reach agreement on controlling private ownership of small arms designed for military purposes, as well as their transfer to non-state actors, including, perhaps, even potential terrorists. Nevertheless, my delegation believes that the follow-up measures that have been reflected in the Programme of Action would strengthen the gains of the Conference.

In the subregional context, my country welcomed the historic inter-Korean summit of 2000 and the ensuing dialogue and contacts, which are important in building confidence between the two Koreas and in our region as a whole. Mongolia welcomes and supports practical ideas and proposals aimed at developing in North-East Asia a mechanism to discuss regional security issues of common concern or interest. As the Mongolian delegation underlined last year, perhaps it is time to consider the possibility of engaging in a regional dialogue, starting with a free exchange of views on the framework of such discussions and dialogue. Mongolia is ready to discuss this issue with interested delegations.

In conclusion, I would like to underline once again the importance that Mongolia attaches to the work of this Committee and to express my delegation's readiness to work with you, Mr. Chairman, and the delegations in bringing our common work to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Vassallo (Malta): Mr. Chairman, this being the first time I take the floor in the Committee, allow me to offer my delegation's congratulations on your election as Chairman of this Committee and to promise our full support to you and the Bureau in the fulfilment of your important duties. At this difficult time for the international community, your experience and steady hand in directing our deliberations are most assuring.

Earlier this week the distinguished representative of Belgium delivered a comprehensive statement on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, including Malta, on the array of agenda items before the First Committee. While reiterating our full support for the content of his statement, allow me to make a number of comments from a Maltese perspective.

In the months since the First Committee completed its deliberations last year, Malta has taken two significant steps that express its continuing commitment to the cause of disarmament. On 23 July 2001, the Government of Malta deposited its instrument of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT is one of the major building blocks of the disarmament edifice that makes our world so much safer than it otherwise would be.

In joining the ever-growing number of States parties to the CTBT, Malta would like to call upon those remaining States that have not ratified the Treaty, in particular those countries whose ratification is necessary for the CTBT to come into force, to do so as soon as possible in the interest of international peace and stability.

I would also like to inform the Committee that on 7 May 2001, Malta ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Malta attended the recent third meeting of States parties to the Ottawa Convention, for the first time as a ratifying State. It was greatly heartened to witness the sterling work of those delegations and members of civil society that have, in a few short years, transformed the anti-landmines movement into a workable convention, whose provisions are respected not only by the ever-increasing number of States parties but also by non-parties, whose actions are coloured by the moral strength of the Convention.

In conclusion, allow me to express the hope, on behalf of my delegation, that the singleness of purpose that the international community has shown in recent weeks in reaction to the horrific attacks of 11 September can be harnessed in a manner that would allow us to break out of the stalemate that prevents us from making progress on several fronts in the disarmament debate.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, Mr. Chairman, allow me to convey my delegation's congratulations on your election to preside over the work of the Committee. I have no doubt that your ability, background and vast diplomatic experience will contribute to the success of our work. Also allow me to extend the congratulations of my delegation to the other members of the Bureau.

The recent terrorist attacks were a criminal act, which Argentina — which has also been a victim of grave acts of international terrorism — repudiates. All civilized societies in the world felt their foundations and values of freedom, solidarity, and the respect and adherence to the basic principles of human coexistence were impacted by those acts.

This threat to international peace and security requires strong action from the States, as indicated by the resolutions adopted by the Security Council, in order to find means to intensify and better coordinate the exchange of operational information, among other main aspects, with respect to the trade in arms, explosives and dangerous materials, and with respect to the threat posed by the possibility that terrorist groups might acquire weapons of mass destruction.

The Republic of Argentina, as was expressed in our country's intervention in the Committee during the past session of the General Assembly, maintains more than ever that universal accession to legal instruments for non-proliferation and the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction should be the goal we set for the first decade of the twenty-first century. Only if we set that goal will it be possible to lay the foundations for guaranteed mutual security.

Argentina believes it is essential to intensify the technical facilities for carrying out the measures of control established by the subregional, regional and international agreements on weapons of mass destruction. To do this, priority must be given to adapting, within each country's judicial system, the norms and procedures for facilitating the exchange of information for combating the proliferation of these weapons.

Argentina promotes transparency in the transfer of sensitive technology and the adoption of common norms and parameters for the identification of dual-use materials in order to prevent illicit trade, which could have serious regional and international consequences.

Argentina sees in the upcoming session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) an opportunity for effective implementation of the practical steps agreed on by the 187 States parties to the Treaty in order to advance the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of that instrument. In this context, we wish to emphasize the call to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the immediate beginning of negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Argentina hopes that the Second Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will be an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of this treaty as a means of assuring the ending of nuclear testing.

In our subregion, this year marks the tenth year since the creation of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC). This agency is the result of a nuclear rapprochement between our two countries and represents a fundamental part of the broader commitment to a policy of nuclear non-proliferation

and the promotion of the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy.

It should be pointed out that on the basis of the confidence and transparency on nuclear materials achieved through the system of safeguards and mutual monitoring, by means of the ABACC, on 14 August 2001, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Nuclear Energy Applications (ABAEN) was created. Its mission is to promote and intensify cooperation between both countries in the field of the application of nuclear energy, to identify areas in which joint projects can be designed and executed, and to establish mechanisms for the implementation of such cooperation.

Argentina regrets that after six years the negotiations of the Ad Hoc Group of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention on the subject of the text proposed by the Chairman has not reached agreement on the creation of an effective verification protocol that would reduce the risks presented by these weapons and discourage their proliferation.

In this context, we believe that all countries should participate as we elaborate a legally binding instrument, and we call for innovative approaches that might serve to strengthen the verification regime in a legitimate way.

The policy of the Argentine Republic, which includes the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international security and export controls on sensitive technology and military materials, is also sensitive to concerns about missile proliferation.

The strengthening of international norms and political instruments designed to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is of vital importance to my country. For a long time, the Missile Technology Control Regime, to which Argentina is a party, was the sole control and monitoring mechanism with regard to missile non-proliferation. We must now follow up this approach by taking action at the global and multilateral levels. That is why my country supports the universalization of the draft international code of conduct in this area, which is to be submitted to an ad hoc negotiating process with a view to the holding of an international conference for its adoption in 2002. Furthermore, we support the work being done by the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts, which will also submit its report during the next session of the General Assembly, in accordance with General Assembly 55/33 A.

As is well known, Argentina is on the basis of its own experience, an enthusiastic promoter of confidence-building measures. The confidence-building measures that we have implemented at the regional, subregional and bilateral levels have, to a large extent, contributed to the creation of a new reality throughout our hemisphere which has resulted in mature, strong and productive relationships. We therefore hope that all delegations will demonstrate their political will and commitment so as to ensure that next year the Disarmament Commission, in concluding consideration of this item, will make recommendations that yield benefits in terms of greater understanding among all of us.

In this context, Argentina would like to stress the conclusions of the work that we, together with Chile, entrusted to the Economic Commission for Latin America with regard to a standardized common methodology for assessing defence expenditure. Furthermore, we are particularly interested in the similar initiative taken by Chile and Peru, and we hope that the same methodology will be used by other countries in the region.

That model will make it possible for us to formulate rational comparisons of expenditure with a view to setting benchmarks for confidence-building and transparency. Furthermore, it should be considered as complementary to other transparency and confidence-building measures, such as the submission of information to the Register of Conventional Arms and the obligations entered into in the context of international agreements.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects represented a turning point in the attitude of States to combating the illicit trafficking in such weaponry. The Programme of Action adopted at that Conference sets out a series of measures to put an end to that illicit trade, making arms transfers more transparent and supporting regional disarmament measures.

Argentina welcomes the fact that the Programme of Action includes a commitment to establishing standards for the criminalization of the manufacture of and illicit trade in such weapons, as well as to devising administrative standards and setting up bodies to

monitor their manufacture, circulation, export and import. The development of international criteria on arms brokering, the detection of routes used for illicit trafficking and the location of supply lines is also promising.

Using the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference last July, as well as the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and other international instruments in this arena as a benchmark, Argentina believes that it is vital to implement coordination mechanisms so as to activate the instruments that are already in existence to harmonize standards and make effective procedures designed to combat the illicit trafficking in and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The arms group established by the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) and Bolivia and Chile, created in accordance with the decision taken by the Presidents of the six member countries, has set the goal of establishing a subregional mechanism to ensure implementation and follow up of both the Inter-American Convention and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Ottawa Convention succeeded in enshrining as an international obligation the call for the elimination of anti-personnel landmines. Such mines cause serious injury to civilians and their harmful effects continue for decades, well beyond the end of the conflicts that gave rise to their use in the first place. Our part of the world is one of those that have responded most positively to this commitment, inasmuch as virtually all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are parties to the Convention.

Argentina fully shares in the objectives enshrined in that Convention, and has been working towards its universalization and full implementation. In this context, we would like to emphasize that in November last year in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Canada organized a regional seminar on mine destruction, in which the Organization of American States took part. That seminar represented a major step towards the implementation of article 4 of the Convention.

Furthermore, my country hopes that the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will provide an opportunity to strengthen that legal instrument and promote the broadening of its application to all armed conflicts, both international and otherwise. We hope that the international community will find a solution to the problem posed by explosive remnants of war, as well as other weapons that cause indiscriminate harm.

We must advance towards building a safer and more integrated world. If we adopt an integrated approach, we, the United Nations as a whole, will be able to find solutions to problems such as disarmament and arms control, which affect us all.

We hope that this will prove to be a fruitful session of the First Committee. You can rest assured, Mr. Chairman, of the full cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. Keita (Mali) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the other officers of the Bureau. You can rely on our support in carrying out your difficult task. Finally, I would like to thank Mr. Dhanapala for his very elucidating comments at the opening of our discussion.

Please allow me to join other speakers in expressing my delegation's solidarity and deep compassion to the American delegation following the terrorist attacks that plunged the country into mourning on 11 September. These acts prove once again that it is up to us to elaborate new concepts to better guarantee international security.

The question of disarmament today is of particular interest in the world. Mali, which played a pioneering role in the area of micro-disarmament, will continue to support actively international efforts in this area. In national terms, Mali initiated novel operations within the context of a project called "Project of support for local commissions for the recovery of small arms". Supported by Belgian technical cooperation, it consisted of financing collective economic activities for the benefit of persons who had surrendered weapons and who would then become involved in development activities with the assistance of established local commissions for the recovery of small arms.

The basic principle of "development against weapons" gives rise to free and voluntary disarmament. To date, 422 small arms and thousands of rounds of ammunition have been voluntarily turned over by the localities involved. The involvement of neighbouring countries is keenly hoped for to ensure the success of the project, because it has a positive impact on post-conflict peace-building. In subregional terms, at the level of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which my country is now chairing, the most important event remains the renewal of the moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of light weapons signed in Abuja, Nigeria, on 31 October 1998 by the ECOWAS heads of State. This renewal, which takes effect on 1 November 2001 for a period of three years, highlights the determination of ECOWAS to contribute effectively to international security. It is desirable that this initiative extend to all subregions.

The international community must support and accompany these efforts of ECOWAS member States with greater cooperation and better coordination in the overall action to halt the phenomenon of the proliferation of small arms. As in previous years, we shall introduce for adoption a draft resolution on assistance to States to halt illicit trafficking in and for the collection of small arms and light weapons.

In regional terms, Mali hosted an African Ministerial Conference on the proliferation of small arms in November and December 2000, at the end of which the Bamako Declaration was adopted. This text was the inspiration for the work of the first United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; it reaffirms the commitment of States members of the Organization of African Unity to the principles and rules of international law and expresses their grave concern at the persistence of the devastating consequences of the proliferation of light weapons in Africa.

Mali welcomes the holding of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the adoption of its Programme of Action. The challenge remains to move ahead with the agenda that we have prepared in this area.

We believe that the control and monitoring of illicit trafficking in small arms is essential. It requires vigilance and firm commitment on the part of the international community in order to allow the United Nations to play the central role that it should play.

In the field of nuclear disarmament, Mali will continue to lend its active support to international efforts. In that respect, it attaches particular importance to the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones created on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at between States of the region involved. Africa, as we know, has acquired the Treaty of Pelindaba. In that regard, we appeal for commitments undertaken during the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be respected. At last year's Conference, an ambitious programme of action was adopted.

To conserve all of the NPT's credibility, we believe it necessary to take into account a certain number of measures: the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); the moratorium on nuclear weapons tests; the implementation of the provisions of START II and the conclusion of START III; the conclusion of an agreement on guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States; and the transparent management of fissile materials under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

It is regrettable that the work of the Disarmament Commission was not successful regarding a fissile material cut-off treaty.

We welcome the holding in Dakar, Senegal, next month of a workshop on international cooperation and national procedures for implementation and ratification of the CTBT by the States of West and Central Africa. That workshop will make it possible to make certain matters more visible, such as the question of the techniques to be used for the Treaty's verification regime, the creation of regional data centres in Africa and the signature and ratification of the Treaty.

In conclusion, the international community should spare no effort to establish confidence in the field of disarmament. Mali pleads for heightened international cooperation and for the strengthening of capacities in the subregions and regions in their efforts to attain disarmament and international security. We express our wish that this session will provide momentum.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me at the outset congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of our Committee at this important juncture. I am sure that your vast experience in disarmament and your diplomatic skills are important assets that will help this Committee to achieve positive results this year.

The major international security development since last year is no doubt the recent tragic terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., which have outraged the international community. My country, along with other members of the international community, has firmly condemned these terrorist attacks and has expressed its support for collective international efforts within the framework of the United Nations to combat and prevent such horrible acts of violence.

This incident, which was carried out by circles that reject norms and regulations of international law and jeopardize the lives of innocent civilians to achieve their political ends, has rightly caused major concerns within the international community. Although it is a very sad and sorrowful event in contemporary global history, we hope that it will serve to produce a positive outcome, one beneficial to the whole world.

Apart from the security, humanitarian, economic and social aspects of the terrorist attacks, this tragic incident showed that security in the new international arena is indivisible and equally at stake in all parts of our planet. It has also shown that our civilization is more vulnerable than ever to threats, particularly from weapons of mass destruction.

Weapons of mass destruction are the most threatening danger to humanity and civilization. Their use would be so catastrophic that we should mobilize all our efforts to strengthen legal and political restraints against the development, production and use of these inhumane weapons.

Nuclear weapons are the most horrible among weapons of mass destruction and should therefore be dealt with as the highest priority. The magnitude of the devastation caused by such weapons, as experienced in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is sufficient grounds for increasing our efforts to prevent by all means the use of nuclear weapons and therefore make a ban against such weapons universal.

Five years after the International Court of Justice, in its Advisory Opinion on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons, recalled the legal commitment of all States to implement article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, no tangible efforts have been made to move towards total elimination. The partial bilateral agreements aimed at reducing such weapons are also in limbo. Furthermore, the 2000 Final Document of the Review Conference of the States parties to the NPT, the outcome of their painstaking negotiations over five years, awaits implementation.

The 2000 NPT Review Conference Final Document provides the most viable basis for reviewing the way in which the NPT has been implemented, as well as how its implementation can be secured and strengthened in the future. The elements envisaged in the 2000 Final Document on nuclear disarmament, practical measures to achieve total elimination, including the necessity to conclude arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as the provisions of the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency's and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, are all key ingredients in achieving the common objective of establishing a solid international regime to ban nuclear weapons.

Next year the initiation of a four-year preparatory process to review and strengthen the NPT and its 2000 Final Document will provide the best forum to consolidate such common efforts. We hope that this opportunity will be utilized effectively to encourage further steps to implement the practical measures envisaged in the 2000 Final Document.

In this context, I would like to emphasize the critical importance of the commitment of all States to advance the initiative of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, which has been endorsed and called for by the General Assembly for the last 25 years, is now only impeded by Israel's intransigent policy of refraining from committing itself not to use and develop nuclear weapons. The 2000 NPT Final Document, adopted by consensus, called Israel on to adhere to the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under the IAEA full-scope safeguards. This international call needs to be pursued with vigilance and in all seriousness.

Israeli policy today is the only source of tension and conflict in the region, and its nuclear capability has produced no less than terror, instability and insecurity. The continuing daily bloodshed of the innocent Palestinian people in the occupied territories is only one of the manifestations of such policies in the region. The international community should make every effort to stop these violent acts against civilians.

Biological weapons, as another dangerous class of weapons of mass destruction, although banned and prohibited under international law, still pose a real threat to our societies. Bioterrorism is not science fiction any more and has the potential to bring the world into an era of fear and insecurity. My country, as an original State party to the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), cannot refrain from expressing its concerns over the lack of universality of this important instrument. Our basic point of departure to fight the development and the proliferation of such weapons should therefore be to concentrate on reinforcing consolidated efforts to achieve universality of the BWC and its effective implementation.

Unfortunately, the recent failure of the 10-year-long negotiations to conclude an additional protocol to this Convention, due to the position of the United States, has caused international concern. We strongly hope that such a development will not give an improper signal to wrong circles under these circumstances. We furthermore remain hopeful that the new situation will encourage the United States to review its position and open the way for stimulating momentum to revive the Geneva negotiations with the aim of concluding the BWC protocol. The protocol would provide States sufficient means to strengthen effective enforcement of the objectives enshrined in the Convention and facilitate and ensure international cooperation for peaceful purposes. Today, encouraging and promoting international cooperation to combat infectious diseases, which are again an emerging global threat to all — developed or developing countries — is proved to be more essential than ever. Effective global combat against infectious diseases can be brought about through the promotion of peaceful cooperation between developed and developing countries.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is also suffering from the lack of universality. Every effort should be made to encourage the accession of more parties to the Convention, particularly in the Middle East region. Furthermore, new resources need to be provided to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague to enable it to engage in a full-scale humanitarian medical operation should any chemical attack be carried out against innocent people. In this respect, my country, based on its particular sad experience as a victim of these inhumane weapons, has continuously presented specific initiatives and provisions within the framework of the CWC and the OPCW aimed at strengthening the Organization's capability and capacity to assist and protect countries against such attacks. We believe basically that the OPCW needs more resources and logistics for the purpose of ensuring assistance and protection for innocent people against chemical weapons.

Although weapons of mass destruction are the most threatening of weapons to our societies, in circumstances of civil war and armed conflicts small arms and light weapons have proved to be equally deadly and brutal. The convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was the culmination of international efforts to address ways and means to stop such illicit trade. I believe that we should be delighted that the Conference was successful in producing a Programme of Action that provides the best possible effective measures at the national, regional and international levels to prevent and combat illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In the meantime, I would like to join with a great number of States in expressing concern over the failure of the Conference to elaborate a position with regard to the regulation of the domestic circulation of small arms and light weapons as well as the very crucial issue of the transfer of such weapons to non-State actors, because of the position of one State.

We share the position expressed by the President of the Conference in his statement at the Conference. We believe that there is an urgent need to address these issues so that a final agreement can be reached in our future deliberations, in the course of which a review of the implementation of the Programme of Action is envisaged.

Last year's General Assembly resolution on the issue of missiles has now opened the possibility for the United Nations, for the first time ever, to consider and address the issue.

We welcome the establishment of the Panel of Governmental Experts by the United Nations Secretary-General to assist him to prepare a report on missiles in all its aspects, for submission to the next session of the General Assembly. In the first meeting of the Panel, convened this summer, the experts were able to work out the structure of the report, identify the main areas of missile-related issues and address all aspects of missiles in general terms. We are certain that the two remaining meetings of the Panel, envisaged for next year, will provide the best opportunity for the experts to conclude their work successfully and pave the ground for the continuation of the work within the United Nations.

It is now well established that universal norms and guidelines on missiles can be effective if they are multilaterally negotiated and agreed. Any initiative or arrangement short of multilateral negotiations and agreements will not have the credibility to achieve universality. The Panel of Governmental Experts is therefore the best mechanism to address different aspects of missiles and, accordingly, to make its recommendations on the follow-up mechanism. I hereby would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for their efforts and hard work to establish this Panel.

Mr. Mohammed (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee for this year. Congratulations will also be extended by the Permanent Representative of my country when he makes his statement next week.

We understand the importance of saving time so that the Committee will be able to achieve its objectives. We therefore did not want to take the floor before the time came for us to make our general statement. But we find it necessary to explain a few points.

In reference to the statement made by the distinguished representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union, we would like to clarify the following points.

The first is that the representative of Belgium referred to what he called the secret nuclear programme of Iraq. In this regard, we would like to say that Iraq has no such programme. Iraq is party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and is subject to the full scope of the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this respect, I would like to refer to the reports of the IAEA, which were presented to the Security Council on 8 October 1997 and on 7 October 1998. I quote from the second document:

> "As reported in detail in the progress report dated 8 October 1997 (document S/1997/779), and based on all credible information available to date, the Agency's verification activities in Iraq have resulted in the evolution of a technically coherent picture of Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme. The verification activities have revealed no indications that Iraq had achieved its programme objective of producing nuclear weapons or that Iraq had produced more than a few grams of weapon-usable nuclear material or had clandestinely acquired such material. Furthermore, there are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material of any practical significance. In February 1994, IAEA completed the removal from Iraq of all weapon-usable nuclear material — essentially research reactor fuel — under IAEA safeguards." (*S/1998/927, para. 17*)

The contents of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency raises questions as to what was talked about here yesterday. This is the second year in which an inspection team has visited Iraq in full cooperation with the Iraqi authorities. As Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director-General of the IAEA, has pointed out, the team was able to verify that Iraq's nuclear materials are in compliance with the full-scope safeguards regime of the IAEA, as is clear from the report of the IAEA, which was referred to the Security Council in document S/2000/300. There is a similar report for this year.

Secondly, concerning the reference that the distinguished representative of Belgium made to the resolutions of the Security Council, we would like to say that Iraq has implemented all its obligations under Security Council resolution 678 (1991). This was indicated by some members of the Security Council and also by some members of the Special Commission to which the representative referred in his statement.

I would like to quote Mr. Scott Ritter, chief of the concealment unit for United Nations Special

Commission (UNSCOM), in an article in *Arms Control Today*, of June 2000:

> "By the end of 1998, Iraq had, in fact, been disarmed to a level unprecedented in modern history, but UNSCOM and the Security Council were unable — and in some instances unwilling — to acknowledge this accomplishment."

Finally, my delegation seriously calls upon the Committee to consider this matter objectively and fairly and to refrain from following various political viewpoints, because we should not disregard the full cooperation provided by Iraq in this regard. We are ready to clarify this for any delegation if it should so require.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.